

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Role of Reading in The Development of Personality and Creative Abilities in Elementary School Students

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Abstract

This article examines the influence of systematic reading on the formation of personality traits and the development of creative potential in elementary school students. Early childhood is a sensitive period for establishing core values and developing imagination and critical thinking. The author analyzes the mechanisms by which literary texts influence a child’s emotional intelligence, coherent speech, and creativity. The paper presents effective pedagogical methods and techniques that help engage modern students in reading in the context of the digitalization of education.

KEY WORDS

Early elementary school age, reading literacy, personality development, creative abilities, imagination, emotional intelligence.

INTRODUCTION

The current stage of societal development is characterized by a shift in the information environment. Traditional books are giving way to digital media and visual content. In this context, a decline in interest in reading among the younger generation has become a global trend. This trend is particularly alarming when it comes to elementary school students. Early school age (7–10 years) is the foundation upon which further education, socialization, and personal development are built.

Reading at this age cannot be viewed merely as a technical skill of decoding symbols. It is a highly complex process of perception, comprehension, and co-creation. A loss of interest in books at this stage leads to a decline in literacy, a narrowing of vocabulary, a delay in the development of abstract thinking, and emotional numbness. Therefore, the challenge of finding

effective ways to develop a child’s personality and creative potential through books remains one of the most pressing

A young elementary school student’s perception of a literary text is unique. According to L. S. Vygotsky, a child of this age possesses “naive realism”: they perceive the events in a book as real, sincerely empathize with the characters, and engage with the plot on an emotional level.

Elementary school marks the transition from a playful perception of the world to an academic one. Reading skills evolve from automatic syllable recognition to a conscious, in-depth understanding of subtext. The success of this transition depends on how well the text resonates with the child’s inner world. Table 1 outlines the key stages in the evolution of children’s perception of text.

Table 1. Stages of text comprehension development in elementary school students

Grade	Nature of perception	Primary reading need
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1 grade	Fragmentary, reliance on illustrations.	Dynamic plot, vivid characters.
2 grade	Concrete, empathy with characters.	Moral evaluation of actions (“good vs. evil”).
3 grade	Analytical, understanding of hidden meaning.	Interest in the characters’ motivations.
4 grade	Synthetic, formation of personal judgment.	Search for answers to life’s questions.

Reading is always a dialogue between the author and the reader. When a child reads, their brain performs a tremendous task of translating graphic symbols into vivid images. This process requires the active engagement of memory, attention, and apperception (the influence of past experience on perception). Unable to see a ready-made image (as in a movie or computer game), the student is forced to independently “fill in” the details of the setting, the characters’ appearances, and the intonations of their voices. Educational psychology interprets this phenomenon as co-creation, which activates both the right and left hemispheres of the brain simultaneously.

Fiction serves as a transmitter of cultural codes and moral norms. Through fairy tales, fables, and stories by Russian and foreign classics (K. Ushinsky, L. Tolstoy, V. Dragunsky, A. Lindgren), children become acquainted with concepts such as justice, honor, friendship, compassion, and patriotism.

When reading quality literature, internalization occurs—the translation of external social norms into the inner world of the individual. Children learn to compare their own actions with the behavior of their favorite characters. Books provide a model for behavior in complex life situations without direct, intrusive moralizing on the part of adults, which often provokes resistance in children.

Emotional intelligence (EQ) involves the ability to recognize others’ emotions, understand people’s motivations, and manage one’s own feelings. Literature provides a safe space for experiencing a wide range of emotions: from gentle sadness to righteous anger.

By reading about the challenges faced by characters in books, elementary school students learn empathy. They begin to

understand that the people around them (parents, classmates, teachers) can also experience pain, hurt, fear, or joy. A well-developed sense of empathy reduces children’s aggression and facilitates their smooth integration into the school community.

Creative abilities (creativity) are based on flexibility, originality, and productive thinking. The main driver of creativity is imagination. No other academic subject develops reproductive and productive imagination as effectively as literature.

As they read, children encounter metaphors, hyperboles, and allegories. This broadens the boundaries of their habitual thinking and breaks down cognitive patterns. A student who reads a lot demonstrates higher scores on creativity tests (for example, Torrance tests). They are able to propose a greater number of unconventional solutions to the same problem, as their internal mental lexicon and store of imagery are incredibly rich.

A child who reads has a vocabulary that significantly outpaces that of peers who limit themselves to watching video content. A high level of linguistic competence allows the student to successfully engage in their own literary and verbal creativity.

This manifests itself in the creation of their own fairy tales, stories, and poems; the ability to express their thoughts vividly, coherently, and logically in both spoken and written form; the ease with which they compose metaphors and riddles; and successful participation in theatrical performances, skits, and school debates.

For reading to fulfill its developmental function, it must bring joy to the child. Authoritarian methods (“You must read 10

pages”) do not work today. Elementary school teachers need to implement innovative technologies that stimulate students’ intrinsic motivation.

Interactive reading requires students to take an active role during text analysis. An effective tool here is the technology for developing critical thinking through reading and writing (RKMP).

Techniques that have proven to be effective:

1. “Reading with Pauses.” The teacher pauses the reading at the most intriguing moment and asks the children to predict what will happen next. This stimulates cause-and-effect thinking and imagination.

2. “Prediction Tree.” A visual diagram where the trunk represents the topic, the branches represent predictions (“What will happen?”), and the leaves represent arguments supporting those predictions.

3. “Cinquain.” A five-line poetic form that requires students to synthesize complex information and express the essence of a phenomenon in a few concise words.

Translating literary images into other modalities (visual, kinesthetic) deepens understanding of the text and develops creative skills. The following activities are recommended for literature classes:

- Illustration and comic book creation. Changing the format in which information is presented develops spatial thinking.

- Dramatization (theatrical performance). Staging excerpts from literary works helps students “live out” a character’s role physically and emotionally.

- Alternative ending. The task of coming up with a different ending for a well-known fairy tale or story stimulates predictive abilities and flexible thinking.

CONCLUSION

This study leads to the conclusion that reading in elementary school is a fundamental factor in the harmonious development of the individual and their creative potential. It addresses a range of critical pedagogical tasks: from the formation of a basic system of moral values and the development of emotional intelligence to the stimulation of creative thinking, imagination, and linguistic creativity.

The success of this process in today’s reality is impossible without modernizing approaches to teaching literature.

Elementary school teachers must move away from mechanical monitoring of reading techniques toward organizing deep, interactive, and creative work with texts. Only then will books become, for young students, not a burdensome duty but an effective tool for self-expression, understanding the world, and unlocking their inner talents.

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