

PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE INTEGRATIVE APPROACH TO DEVELOPING COGNITIVE COMPETENCIES IN PRESCHOOL CHILD

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Abstract: *The article analyzes the psychological foundations of the integrative approach to developing cognitive competencies in 5–6-year-old preschool children. It examines the interrelationship of perception, attention, memory, thinking, speech, and imagination. The study also substantiates the role of the integrative approach in developing children's independent thinking, research, and communication skills, as well as its potential within the "Ilk Qadam" State Curriculum.*

Keywords: *integrative approach, cognitive competence, preschool education, cognitive development, psychological processes, 5–6-year-old children, "Ilk Qadam" State Curriculum.*

Аннотация: *В статье проанализированы психологические основы интегративного подхода к развитию познавательных компетенций у детей дошкольного возраста 5–6 лет. Раскрыта взаимосвязь восприятия, внимания, памяти, мышления, речи и воображения. Обосновано значение интегративного подхода в развитии самостоятельного мышления, исследовательских и коммуникативных навыков детей, а также его возможности в рамках государственной учебной программы «Илк кадам».*

Ключевые слова: *интегративный подход, познавательная компетентность, дошкольное образование, когнитивное развитие, психологические процессы, дети 5–6 лет, программа «Илк кадам».*

Annotatsiya: *Ushbu maqolada maktabgacha yoshdagi 5–6 yoshli bolalarda bilish kompetensiyalarini rivojlantirishda integrativ yondashuvning psixologik asoslari tahlil qilingan. Bolalarning idrok, diqqat, xotira, tafakkur, nutq va tasavvur jarayonlarining o‘zaro bog‘liqligi yoritilgan. Shuningdek, integrativ yondashuvning “Ilk qadam” davlat o‘quv dasturidagi imkoniyatlari hamda bolaning mustaqil fikrlashi, tadqiqotchilik va kommunikativ ko‘nikmalarini rivojlantirishdagi ahamiyati asoslangan.*

Kalit so‘zlar: *integrativ yondashuv, bilish kompetensiyasi, maktabgacha ta’lim, kognitiv rivojlanish, psixologik jarayonlar, 5–6 yoshli bolalar, “Ilk qadam” dasturi.*

The analysis of the psychological foundations of the integrative approach is of particular importance in providing a scientific basis for the process of developing cognitive competencies in preschool children. The effectiveness of the educational process primarily depends on a deep understanding of the child’s age-related and psychological characteristics and on organizing pedagogical influences in accordance with the laws of the child’s development. From a researcher’s perspective, the psychological essence of the integrative approach is manifested in viewing the child’s cognitive activity not as a collection of separate mental processes, but as an integrated system in which these processes are interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

The age of 5–6 is a stage of preparation for school education, during which significant qualitative changes occur in children’s cognitive processes. At this age, the child begins to demonstrate himself or herself not merely as a passive observer of the surrounding world, but as an active subject who seeks to understand it, identify causes, and draw

conclusions based on personal experience. During this period, perception, attention, memory, thinking, imagination, and speech develop in close interconnection. Therefore, organizing the educational process on an integrative basis at this developmental stage corresponds to the natural psychological characteristics of the child.

Constructivist theories of development occupy an important place in understanding the psychological foundations of the integrative approach. According to these theories, children do not simply receive knowledge in a ready-made form; rather, they actively construct it through their own experiences and activities. This idea is particularly important for preschool children, as they acquire knowledge more effectively through concrete objects, phenomena, and activities than through abstract concepts.

As an example, in the modern stage of development of the preschool education system in the Republic of Uzbekistan, organizing the educational process in accordance with children's personal developmental patterns, age-related characteristics, and individual abilities is regarded as one of the priority areas of scientific and pedagogical development. In particular, the use of an integrative approach in developing cognitive competencies in preschool children makes it possible to ensure the integrity of educational content and promote children's independent thinking, research activities, and practical experience.

In the state policy aimed at improving the preschool education system, ensuring children's high-quality preparation for school, developing the necessary competencies, and creating a developmental educational environment are identified as major priorities. This approach is reflected in the conceptual documents related to preschool

education in the Republic of Uzbekistan, which emphasize the need to organize children's development as an integrated pedagogical process rather than as a collection of separate developmental areas.

The scientific and methodological significance of the concept of preschool education lies in recognizing the child as an active subject of the learning process rather than as a passive participant. This principle is consistent with one of the fundamental ideas of the integrative approach. A 5–6-year-old child perceives the surrounding environment not through separate academic subjects or isolated topics, but holistically through everyday experiences, observations, play activities, and interaction with adults.

For example, during an integrative activity organized with 5–6-year-old children on the topic “Water and Its Properties,” the child simultaneously develops several areas of learning and development. Through observing the processes of freezing and evaporation, children acquire knowledge about natural phenomena; by measuring the volume of water, they develop mathematical concepts. When creating a story about water, their vocabulary is enriched, while drawing or carrying out a creative activity contributes to the development of aesthetic and creative abilities. Thus, several competencies are developed in an interconnected manner within a single pedagogical activity.

The analysis shows that the practical implementation of the integrative approach within the national preschool education system is clearly reflected in the “Ilk Qadam” State Curriculum. The curriculum is aimed at ensuring the comprehensive development of preschool children, and one of its major methodological principles is the provision of holistic child development. Its content integrates physical, socio-emotional, speech and language, cognitive, and creative areas of development.

The fact that the developmental areas of children are considered as an interconnected system in the “Ilk Qadam” State Curriculum represents one of the important characteristics of the integrative approach. A child’s cognitive activity is not limited to the process of thinking alone. Perception, attention, memory, speech, imagination, social experience, and creativity develop together. Therefore, activities organized in preschool education should also have a comprehensive and integrative character.

An analysis of the content potential of the “Ilk Qadam” curriculum demonstrates that it provides the necessary pedagogical conditions for developing children’s cognitive competencies. In particular, research skills are developed through observation, experimentation, solving problematic situations, completing play-based tasks, and organizing creative activities.

For example, when the topic “Seasons” is organized on an integrative basis, the child not only acquires knowledge about the seasons of the year, but also:

- develops logical thinking by arranging the four seasons in chronological order;
- understands cause-and-effect relationships by observing changes in weather;
- develops practical decision-making skills by selecting clothing appropriate for different seasons;
- develops speech competence by composing a story about a particular season;
- demonstrates creative abilities by depicting seasonal landscapes.

This example demonstrates the essence of the integrative approach: knowledge is not acquired separately, but is formed within the unified content of the child's activity.

The “Ilk Qadam” State Curriculum also places considerable emphasis on creating a developmental environment. Such an environment provides pedagogical opportunities for children to engage in independent activities, experiment, make choices, and express their own ideas. Particularly at the age of 5–6, such an environment supports the child's intrinsic need for learning. At this developmental stage, children tend to discover new knowledge through their own experiences rather than simply receive ready-made information.

From the perspective of the integrative approach, the role of the teacher also changes. In the traditional educational model, the teacher primarily functions as the main source of information, whereas in modern preschool education, the teacher is viewed as a subject who organizes, guides, and facilitates the child's cognitive activity and development. Instead of providing ready-made answers to children's questions, the educator encourages them to observe, explore, and draw independent conclusions.

In this regard, the Concept of Preschool Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the “Ilk Qadam” State Curriculum can be considered important sources defining the conceptual and theoretical foundations for developing cognitive competencies in 5–6-year-old children. The principles of holistic development, the competency-based approach, activity-based learning, and reliance on the child's personal experience promoted in these documents form the national pedagogical model of the integrative approach.

The main advantage of the integrative approach in developing cognitive competencies in 5–6-year-old children is that it makes it possible to develop all of the child’s mental processes within a unified activity.

First, perception acquires an active and purposeful character under the conditions of integrative education. In a traditional approach, the child often acts as a recipient of ready-made information, whereas in integrative activities, the child observes, compares, differentiates, and formulates conclusions independently. For example, during an activity on the topic “Properties of Water,” children observe different states of water, conduct experiments, compare the results, and express their observations through speech. Thus, perception develops in close connection with thinking and speech.

Second, attention develops naturally through integrative activities. Although involuntary attention is dominant among preschool children, interesting, practical, and meaningful activities contribute to the development of elements of voluntary attention. During integrative activities, children learn to maintain their attention for longer periods, understand the purpose of an activity, and strive to achieve a particular result while performing different types of tasks.

Third, memory development can also be effectively supported through integrative activities. Psychological research indicates that preschool children have strongly developed visual and emotional memory. Therefore, linking knowledge not only to verbal explanations but also to experiments, play, visual activities, and practical actions contributes to more durable retention of information.

Fourth, the development of thinking represents one of the central directions of the integrative approach. Although visual-figurative

thinking remains predominant in 5–6-year-old children, elements of logical thinking gradually begin to emerge. Integrative activities enable children to identify cause-and-effect relationships, compare, generalize, and draw conclusions.

For example, when studying the topic of seasons, children not only observe changes in nature, but also:

- arrange the seasons in chronological order;
- compare changes in weather;
- select clothing appropriate for different seasons;
- compose a story about a season;
- create a drawing based on the topic.

In this process, environmental studies, mathematics, speech development, and creative activity are integrated into a unified cognitive process. As a result, children's thinking develops in a systematic and interconnected manner.

Contemporary psychological and pedagogical perspectives view the child not as a passive object of education, but as an active subject of the educational process. The integrative approach is based precisely on this principle. Children do not simply receive knowledge in a ready-made form; rather, they acquire it independently through asking questions, conducting experiments, solving problems, and communicating with others.

In this regard, the views of Jean Piaget are of particular importance. Piaget interpreted children's intellectual development as an active process of cognition. According to his perspective, children construct systems of knowledge through active interaction with the external world. This view is consistent with the fundamental idea of integrative

education because, in integrative activities, children participate not merely as observers but as active researchers.

Jerome Bruner, in turn, substantiated the idea that children acquire knowledge through discovery. According to his perspective, the educational process should stimulate children's exploratory activities. This principle is implemented in the integrative approach through research activities, experimentation, and creative tasks.

Cognitive competence encompasses a preschool child's ability to understand the surrounding environment, ask questions, observe, analyze, compare, draw conclusions, and apply acquired knowledge in new situations. The integrative approach creates a number of pedagogical opportunities for developing these competencies.

First, the integrative approach develops children's curiosity. By combining different types of activities, children ask more questions and attempt to find answers.

Second, this approach fosters independent thinking. Instead of accepting ready-made conclusions, children learn to reason on the basis of their own observations.

Third, integrative activities develop creative thinking because children have the opportunity to use different approaches to complete a single task.

Fourth, integrative education develops communicative competencies. Children learn to express their ideas, exchange opinions with peers, and cooperate with others.

From the researcher's perspective, it can be stated that the psychological foundations of the integrative approach are closely associated with the laws of child development and contribute to the full realization of the natural cognitive potential of 5–6-year-old children.

Through this approach, children acquire knowledge not as isolated pieces of information, but as an integrated system connected with their life experiences. As a result, the cognitive competencies necessary for successful transition to school education are developed consistently and systematically.

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