SPECIFIC FEATURES OF DEVELOPING STUDENTS' FUNCTIONAL LITERACY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LESSONS

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Abstract

This article presents scientifically grounded theories on the development of functional literacy in English language lessons among primary school students. It provides an analysis of the key aspects and distinctive features of fostering functional literacy. In particular, functional literacy is considered an important pedagogical factor in revealing students' individual qualities and enhancing their level of knowledge.

KEYWORDS

Primary education, English language, functional literacy, scientific theory, analysis, methodology, pedagogical technologies, reasoning, personal qualities, ability, knowledge level, pedagogical factor.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, improving the quality of education has become a priority issue for every country. In the Republic of Uzbekistan, in collaboration with the National Center, a program was developed in 2019 to identify and develop students' abilities and talents starting from Grade 1 in general secondary schools, as well as to ensure participation in international assessment programs and competitions aimed at evaluating students' literacy levels.

Functional literacy is a way of orienting an individual within society, linking educational and social activities. It helps individuals solve various real-life problems based on the knowledge acquired during the educational process. The level of a society's functional literacy defines its socio-cultural achievements. If this level remains low, it may lead to the development of a social crisis. Learning English is one of the crucial aspects of developing students' functional literacy. It not only forms competent speech and decision-making skills but also provides opportunities for training specialists in various fields.

In the context of education, ensuring continuity in developing functional literacy during English lessons is of great importance, as it guarantees the consistency of learning. The key to continuity lies in a smooth transition from one level of instruction to the next, a gradual increase in task complexity, and the regular repetition and reinforcement of previously covered material. If the teaching methodology follows a consistent, step-by-step system, it becomes easier to achieve the desired level of literacy. Moreover, the English language teacher must have a deep understanding of not only the first-grade curriculum but also the entire course content.

Properly building coherence in English language instruction and forming functional literacy play an essential role in creating a socio-cultural environment in the classroom.

Reading literacy is based on the ability to understand and use texts. The development of this skill enables learners to improve their thinking and reading capabilities, which in turn allows them to read and speak fluently in English. In modern English language teaching practices,

NEXT SCIENTISTS CONFERENCES

special attention is paid to working independently with texts. Developing this type of literacy allows students to:

– extract relevant information from texts, understand the content, identify the main idea, form theses, and easily distinguish the necessary information;

– skillfully process and analyze texts, compare information of different types, and find evidence to support the theses presented in the text;

– use information derived from texts to solve practical problems.

Creative thinking refers to the ability to apply acquired knowledge effectively in real life. One example of applying creative and reading literacy skills in English classes is through role-play techniques. Language games refer to activities that develop skills based on various language elements (from syllables to micotexts). These games include tasks such as forming words or sentences, constructing monologues or dialogues, etc.

The modern trends of educational system modernization, the specific features of transitioning to an information society, the necessity to increase students' professional mobility in the context of the labor market and employment, as well as the development of highly qualified specialists, all highlight the importance of developing functional literacy.

There are numerous interpretations of the concept of "functional literacy", one of the most modern being "the formation of a professional competence system." This definition has been formulated in scientific dictionaries and reference books. Functional literacy is defined as the degree of readiness of an individual to fulfill tasks assigned or voluntarily undertaken.

The components of functional literacy include:

– legal literacy;

– computer literacy;

– readiness to formalize and present work outcomes in a foreign language;

– ability to work in a team and resolve conflicts;

– competence in managing information and making decisions;

– readiness for self-discipline and lifelong learning.

According to A.A. Leontyev, "A functionally literate person is someone who, in their activities, communication, and various spheres of social relationships, is capable of solving a wide range of real-life problems using all the knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired throughout life."

To ensure that functional literacy is developed during the educational process, English lessons must be organized effectively. There are various methods to achieve functional literacy during the learning of English.

Reading literacy is a key area of functional literacy. Tasks based on continuous and non-continuous texts help in forming students' functional literacy. Often, continuous texts are used. It is important to follow certain guidelines when selecting continuous texts for functional reading tasks:

✓ the text should be engaging;

✓ it should contain new but relevant information;

✓ the difficulty level of the text should match the student's age (and be adapted if needed);

✓ unfamiliar words should be explained in footnotes or glossaries;

✓ the text should not be overloaded with numbers, dates, or terms;

✓ the structure of the text should be coherent;

NEXT SCIENTIST'S CONFERENCES

✓ the content should be relatable to the student's real-life experiences.

CONCLUSION

As noted above, various types of text-based tasks are fundamental exercises in developing functional literacy. It is important to teach students to perform diverse operations with texts, taking into account their genre and stylistic features, so that texts serve as a foundation for teaching all forms of speech activity. For this purpose, a variety of exercises based on educational texts can be used effectively.

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