

Forms And Methods Of Developing Independent Thinking In Teaching Reading In Primary Schools

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Abstract

The development of independent thinking skills in primary school pupils is a crucial aspect of modern education, particularly in the context of teaching reading. This article explores the various forms and methods that can be effectively employed to nurture independent thinking during reading lessons. It discusses interactive, student-centered approaches such as reproductive, heuristic, creative and active learning methods.

Keywords: independent thinking, primary education, reproductive method, heuristic method, creative method, active learning methods.

Formation of a functionally literate personality is one of the priorities of the modern school education system. Such literacy implies not only acquisition of knowledge, but also the ability to effectively apply it in life situations.

The foundations of functional literacy are laid at the stage of primary education. At this stage, pupils form language and speech competencies through targeted and systematic exercises in various types of speech activity - reading, writing, speaking and listening.

In this regard, reading literacy occupies a special place in the system of training primary school pupils as comprehensively mature individuals and is considered one of the main academic subjects. Reading literacy includes not only reading technique, but also higher cognitive actions, such as understanding, analysis, response to what has been read and drawing conclusions.

Methods of teaching reading in primary school are aimed at developing and reinforcing reading skills in pupils. Scientific and theoretical analysis shows that some methods used in the reading process play an important role in increasing the effectiveness of learning. In particular, the following three methods are considered the most effective:

1. Reproductive method (including continuous reading). This method is aimed at processing and consolidating the existing knowledge and skills of pupils. Thanks to continuous reading, pupils develop the skills of accurate, fast and expressive reading. In this process, the reader receives a ready-made text and forms an understanding based on it.

In the process of teaching reading in primary grades, the reproductive method helps pupils to correctly master speech and grammatical structures, and to consolidate skills through imitation and repetition of a reading sample. This method involves offering pupils a sample of learning activity, understanding it and applying it to their own speech. In the context of reading, such activity often involves imitation of phonetic, lexical and intonational forms of reading presented by a teacher or native speaker.

The reproductive method relies primarily on the mechanisms of repetition and imitation. These mechanisms ensure the assimilation of language material on a functional basis, its use in speech practice and the development of language motor skills. With the help of this method, pupils develop not only reading aloud skills, but also the ability to understand hearing, visual perception, rhythm, intonation and the general logical and artistic integrity of the text.

In the process of teaching reading, the reproductive method pursues the following main goals:

- Formation of correct pronunciation skills - teaching phonetically correct and smooth pronunciation of words;
- Development of intonation features of speech - clear transmission of meaning with the help of correct intonation in words and sentences;
- Formation of automated reading aloud - reading words and sentences through a speech reflex;
- Development of auditory and visual perception of the text - ensuring a deep understanding of the content of the text based on the mechanisms of multichannel perception.

Practical forms of the reproductive method

This method can be used in various lesson formats:

- “Echo reading”: the pupil repeats the text aloud after the teacher or audio recording. This is an effective method of teaching by imitating pronunciation and intonation.
- Choral reading: the whole class reads the text aloud at the same time, which helps to develop speech tempo and voice expression.
- Role-playing reading: used when reading dialogic texts and serves to form the emotional expression and speech image of pupils.
- Paused reading: the teacher stops the reading process at certain points, checks content understanding and activates dialogue through questions and answers.
- Reading to the soundtrack: synchronously reading the text with the audio recording, combining the auditory and visual channels, implementing multi-sensory learning activities” [1].

The heuristic method (from the Greek *heurisko* – “find”, “discover”) is a teaching method in which the pupil independently, through active mental activity, “discovers”

new knowledge. This method, unlike the reproductive method, is based not on obtaining ready-made information, but on stimulating the pupil’s curiosity and mental activity. The teacher, in turn, creates favorable conditions for research activities and performs a guiding function.

The use of the heuristic method in the process of teaching reading gives a number of important results:

- forms a stable interest in reading in pupils;
- develops the ability for analytical and critical thinking;
- forms the skills of deep understanding and perception of the text read.

The main methods of the heuristic method:

1. Working with the title of the text - pupils guess the content of the text from the title.
2. Predicting the plot - after reading a certain fragment of the text, pupils independently guess how events will develop.
3. Identifying contradictions - encourages pupils to analyze by asking questions: "Why did the hero act this way?", "Could he have acted differently?"
4. Contextual analysis of vocabulary - focusing on understanding new words not from the dictionary, but through the context of the text.
5. Organizing discussions and debates - increasing learning activity and encouraging re-reading by holding mini-debates and discussions of the content of the text.

The creative method is a teaching method that encourages the pupil to actively work with the text, to show fantasy, imagination and personal attitude. When using this method, the pupil does not receive ready-made information, but processes it based on his own creative views. “The creative approach is aimed at developing artistic thinking, speech, aesthetic feeling and personal perception.” [2] The main goal of the creative method is to form an individual

attitude to the text, personal influence and creative self-expression in the pupil.

Forms of using the creative method in teaching reading:

1. "Artistic retelling is not just retelling the content, but a story that conveys the characters' feelings and their personal attitude to what is happening.
2. Role-playing and dramatization is bringing dialogues to life, distributing roles according to the text and performing them on stage.
3. Continuing or completing the text is writing further development of the text, offering an alternative ending.
4. Creating an illustration is depicting characters, events, scenes or a book cover.
5. Poetic retelling is translating a prose text into poetic form.
6. Collective creative writing is the joint creation of a story, fairy tale, or novella in a group."

Currently, active teaching methods aimed at developing functional literacy, critical thinking of pupils, and preparing them for independent work are acquiring special significance in primary education. They ensure active acquisition of knowledge by pupils, an increase in their intellectual potential, and active participation in the educational process.

The most common methods of active learning are:

Keyword guessing is one of the methods of active learning that helps to arouse interest in reading, increase intellectual activity and deepen understanding of the literary text. This method is widely used in reading lessons and extracurricular literary activities.

The essence of this method is that before reading the text, the teacher offers students several key words or phrases related to the content of the work. Based on these words, students make assumptions about the topic of the text, characters, order of events and

genre. This process is often carried out in pairs or small groups.

Stages of the method application:

Selecting keywords:

The teacher selects 2-6 key words or phrases related to the content of the work (e.g., setting, characters, important objects).

Formulating predictive questions:

For example:

- What do you think this story might be about?
- What events might happen?
- Who might be the main character of the work?

Discussion in class or in pairs:

Pupils can express their assumptions in the form of clusters, diagrams, stories, or oral presentations.

Reading the text:

Pupils read the work and compare their assumptions with the actual content.

Reflection

The teacher deepens the reflection by asking questions:

- Were your assumptions correct?
- What unexpected event happened?
- Why did the author choose these particular words?

As one of the active teaching methods for developing pupils' reading competencies, the method of directed listening and observation occupies a special place. This method encourages pupils not only to listen or read the text, but also to consciously analyze it, delve into the essence of events, empathize with the feelings of the characters and form their own opinions.

Stages of guided listening:

1. Setting a goal before listening

The teacher asks the pupils a specific question or task.

For example:

- "When listening to a piece of writing, pay attention to the hero's feelings."
- "When listening to a story, try to understand why the hero acts this way."

2. Listening/reading the text

The teacher reads the text in an expressive voice. The students listen attentively or read in a whisper.

3. Observation and analysis

After listening to the text, the teacher organizes a discussion using questions.

– “How did you understand the hero’s feelings?”

– “What would you do if you were in this situation?”

– “How did the author describe this event?”

The discussion can be in written or oral form.

The observation method encourages the pupil to consciously perceive the text they read, reflect on the characters' actions, understand the essence of events and connect them with their personal lives. This method encourages pupils to think empathically, reflect on human values and draw conclusions.

Observation stages:

1. Pause for silence and reflection

After reading the text, the teacher gives pupils time to reflect in silence.

For example:

– “Close the book. Stop and think for a moment...”

– “What feelings did this event evoke in you?”

2. Questions for internal and external reflection

– What did you feel?

– What place impressed you?

– How would you act if you were a hero?

– What did you learn from this event?

3. Expression of personal attitude

Pupils express their thoughts and feelings orally or in writing.

Forms:

– Notebook entry;

– Mini-essay;

- An open statement or expression on the “thought wall”.

Directed reading method. This method allows pupils to focus and direct their own

reading. Pupils read independently, looking for answers to pre-set questions, pausing and discussing each paragraph after reading.

Guided reading is a method of organizing experiential or comprehension-based reading in which the teacher:

1. Identifies the purpose of reading/key question for presentation;

2. Chooses guiding questions to help students focus on a specific idea or thought in a given area;

3. Pauses during reading and discusses what they have read;

4. Provides opportunities for deep analysis and conclusions at the end of the lesson.

Stages of directed reading

Step	Activity	Purpose
1. Before reading (provocation)	Reference to basic knowledge, goal setting, title, guess based on illustrations	Preparing pupils for content
2. During the reading (focus)	Read paragraph by paragraph, stop, look for the answer to the question	Focused acquisition of knowledge
3. After reading (conclusion)	Analysis, formation of the main idea, conclusion	Strengthen understanding and generalization

In conclusion, fostering independent thinking in the process of teaching reading at the primary school level is not only necessary but fundamental for the holistic development of young learners. The ability to think independently allows pupils to analyze texts critically, question ideas, make connections with real-life experiences, and express their own viewpoints confidently.

Effective implementation of various forms and methods such as reproductive, heuristic, creative, and active learning

methods can significantly enhance pupils' cognitive engagement and autonomy in the learning process. These approaches not only improve reading comprehension but also nurture essential life skills such as creativity, logical reasoning, and decision-making.

Teachers play a vital role in designing learning environments that promote exploration and inquiry. Therefore, professional development, resource support, and the integration of innovative pedagogical strategies are key to successfully cultivating independent thinking among primary school readers.

By embedding independent thinking into reading instruction from the early years, we lay the foundation for lifelong learning and responsible, thoughtful citizenship.

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