

Age Characteristics of Primary School Students and Their Readiness for Universal Activities

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ABSTRAC

This article discusses the stage of primary education as the most important fundamental period of human life, during which the emotional, intellectual and social formation of the child's personality is highlighted.

Keywords: Primary education, emotional sensitivity, universal educational activities, age characteristics, reflective thinking, person-centered approach, educational components, didactic methods.

INTRODUCTION

The decline in the quality of education in the world and the insufficient development of functional literacy among primary school students are considered one of the central problems of today's pedagogical research. In particular, the UNESCO report notes that, as of 2024, about 70 percent of 10-year-old children around the world will have problems reading and understanding simple text independently, which creates the need to increase the effectiveness of not only knowledge, but also educational activities in primary education. Accordingly, the introduction of educational mechanisms aimed at developing personal, moral, social and communicative competencies in students through the formation of universal educational activities at the very first stage of education is becoming an urgent issue. In today's globalization, the formation of students as independent thinkers, socially active and morally mature individuals through the implementation of person-oriented, activity-based, integrated approaches to the educational process is a priority task for pedagogical science. At the same time, the main documents of state policy, in particular, the Presidential Decree, emphasize the need for educational mechanisms that ensure the comprehensive development of students in primary education. These circumstances, in turn, require a deep analysis of the scientific and theoretical foundations of educating primary

school students through universal educational activities and the development of practically based mechanisms.

In leading higher education institutions of the world, scientific and methodological approaches to educating primary school students through universal educational activities are being systematically studied. In particular, at the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University, fundamental research is being conducted on the integration of activities that ensure the cognitive, emotional and social development of students based on the concept of "whole child development". At the University of Cambridge, special attention is paid to the formation of critical thinking and self-management skills through an activity-based learning model in primary education. Also, at the University of Melbourne, research has been launched in the direction of "Pedagogies of Practice" on building the educational aspects of universal educational activities based on didactic design. Advanced experiences in this regard show that educational activities are becoming not only a source of knowledge, but also a key factor in personal development and socialization. These scientific and practical directions, in turn, require the scientific substantiation of activity-based, person-centered, and contextual approaches to educating primary school students.

Since the development of human capital in the education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the formation of a competitive, socially active and morally mature personality has become a priority area of state policy, the issue of educating primary school students through universal educational activities is gaining urgent scientific and practical importance. In particular, the “Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026” sets the task of widely implementing modern educational technologies, person-oriented approaches and competency-based frameworks in this area, and the formation of personal, moral, communicative and social skills through universal activities requires a special methodological approach (Decree No. PF–60, 2022: p. 11–12). At the same time, against the background of the renewal of the content of education in schools of Uzbekistan, there is an increasing need to scientifically substantiate the educational potential of such activities and develop practical mechanisms. At the same time, the lack of sufficient in-depth analysis of educational components within the framework of activities aimed at the psychological and didactic development of primary school students in existing studies is causing the topic to become an object of scientific research.

METHODOLOGY

According to the concept of the “zone of proximal development” developed by LS Vygotsky, primary school students may not yet be ready to perform complex learning activities completely independently, but they strive to perform these activities with the support of adults (teacher or peer). Through such activities, the child not only acquires new knowledge, but also reveals his inner intellectual potential. This is the most favorable and natural pedagogical condition for the formation of universal learning activities.

Psychological-chronological characteristics

Elementary school students are typically between the ages of 6 and 10. This stage is characterized by the following developmental milestones:

- Decreased neutrality in perception and thinking – the child is able to associate a specific object with more meaning;
- Emotional sensitivity – especially social evaluation, teacher and peer opinions play an important role;

- The level of logicity of speech increases - this is a sign of the formation of a thinking structure;
- Increased activity - the child becomes more inclined to learn through movement;
- Goal orientation begins to emerge - the ability to see results in activities and the desire for them increases.

Pedagogical approaches should not be aimed at limiting the child's activity, but rather at directing it towards a goal, developing self-awareness and management skills.

Universal activity readiness criteria

Universal learning activities include activities that involve independent, reflective, and socially oriented learning, problem solving, and decision making. Elementary school students may be prepared for these activities in the following ways:

1. The naturalness of interest in knowledge – children of this age have a strong natural need to learn (Gippenreiter YB, 2005);
2. Modeling and game-based thinking – learning is more effective through images and actions, rather than abstract concepts;
3. Interest in work and social roles - through universal activities, students learn to work in a team, take on roles, and feel responsible;
4. By being able to answer reflective questions - "What did I learn?", "What was difficult?", "Why is this important?" - the child begins to understand his or her own work.

These preparatory stages are brought about by a properly organized learning environment by the teacher. For example, a lesson process enriched with person-centered, differentiated approaches ensures easy adaptation to universal activities.

Pedagogical conditions and methodological solutions

To increase the level of readiness for universal educational activities, the following conditions must exist in the educational environment:

- Methodologically rich and psychologically

favorable learning environment;

- Lessons based on playful, experimental, and project-based activities;
- Didactic approaches that encourage and enhance positive emotional attitudes;
- Adaptive methodologies that take into account the individual pace of each student.

From this perspective, the effective formation of universal educational activities requires a high level of methodological reflection from the teacher, in-depth knowledge of the characteristics of the psychological development of students, and the ability to establish empathetic communication with them.

It is important to rely on specific stages of ontogenesis in the effective formulation of universal educational activities for elementary school students. According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, children of this age are in the concrete operations stage, they think based on concrete, visible examples and are able to solve real-world problems.

So, universal activities:

- It should include actions such as observing, testing, comparing, and constructing;
- Adaptation of the student to learning through demonstration and imagery;
- Each task should be explained in a real-life context and linked to personal experience.

According to Vygotsky, child development is shaped by social activity and communication. This means that the main forms of universal educational activities - group work, role-playing games, problem-solving tasks - serve to foster a creative approach, social awareness, and personal responsibility.

Criteria for determining the level of readiness of students

The following scientifically based system of criteria can be proposed to determine the level of readiness of students for universal activities:

Criteria	Indicators
Cognitive activity	Asking independent questions, looking for logical connections
Reflexivity	Being able to analyze one's own thoughts, answer "why" questions
Social interaction	Ability to work in a group, accept different opinions, and compromise with peers
Emotional preparation	Active participation, interest in the lesson, creative initiative
Moral perception and judgment skills	Being able to distinguish between good and bad, understanding one's behavior

Based on these criteria, the student's readiness for UOF is accurately assessed and the possibility of an individual approach increases.

The following strategic approaches are proposed to increase the readiness of primary school students for universal educational activities:

1. Creating a positive psychological environment: Recognizing the success of each student, teaching them not to be afraid of mistakes, and providing emotional support.
2. Extensive use of playful and creative activities: Learning through drawing, dramatization, artistic expression, and experiments is effective for children of this age.
3. Organizing educational dialogue: Teaching students to justify their opinions and be heard through discussions of ethical, aesthetic, and social issues between teacher and student.
4. Monitoring and Formative Assessment System: Consistent monitoring of individual student development, interpretive analysis, and reflective assessment—these methods encourage reflective thinking.

In the current education system, students' readiness for universal activities is often assessed only by the "level of knowledge". As a result, personal development criteria such as independent thinking, reflective analysis, social engagement, aesthetic and moral sensitivity are relegated to the background. This limits the educational and social functions of primary education. Therefore, person-centered, reflective, culturally relevant approaches should be a priority in the formation of universal educational activities.

The period of childhood corresponding to primary education (6–10 years) is a complex stage of formation of the human psyche. During this period, the personality begins to take shape, its ability to understand itself, speech and logical thinking develop, and sensitivity to moral norms increases. This makes it necessary to base the involvement of students in universal educational activities (UOF) on their age psychology.

As psychologist Gippenreiter YB noted: "Each child has internal resources for their development, and the task of the

educator is to activate these resources." Therefore, it is important to assess students' readiness for universal activities, taking into account their individual capabilities.

Didactic approach and age-appropriate methods

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Age-appropriate teaching methods serve to reveal the student's need for knowledge. Primary school students better absorb knowledge that is concrete and figurative, close to life experience, rather than abstract concepts. Therefore, the following are important methodological directions in the formation of the UOF:

- Problem-based learning encourages students to explore, thereby enhancing their thinking skills;
- Didactic games - maintain a child's motivation to learn;
- Dialogic approach - teaches the child to exchange ideas and justify their point of view;
- Project-based activities - the child independently performs actions such as planning, making choices, and evaluating the result.

These methods are suitable for each of the universal types of activity (cognitive, communicative, reflective, and social) and create a favorable foundation for personal growth.

Person-centered education and readiness factors

The level of readiness for universal activities may vary from student to student. This includes:

- level of intellectual development,
- family environment,
- previously acquired knowledge and skills,
- motivation,
- depends on factors such as emotional state.

Therefore, modern didactics promotes person-centered education. In this approach, the student:

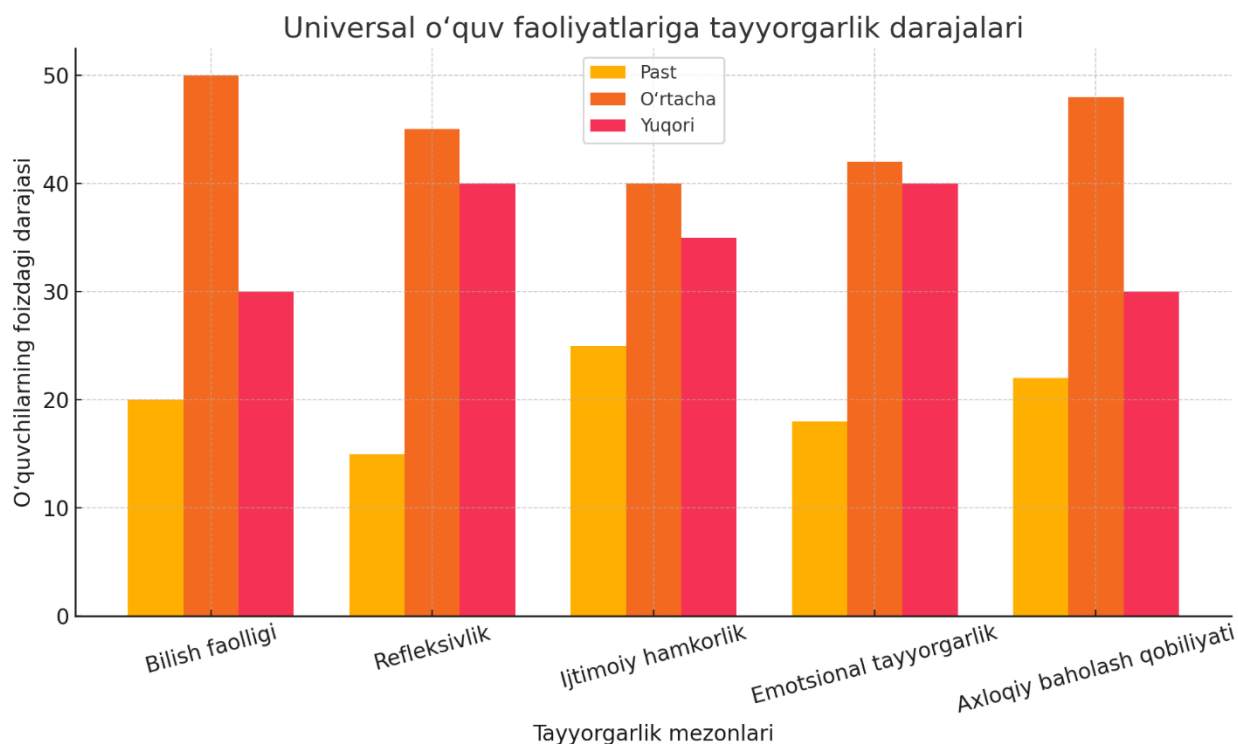
learns at his own pace,

thinks independently,

develops based on an individual approach.

The teacher, however, acts not just as a provider of knowledge, but as a guide, observer, and reflective partner.

Thus, the age characteristics of primary school students - their specific psychological needs, natural curiosity, social search and emotional sensitivity - are a powerful opportunity to gradually, comprehensively and didactically shape universal educational activities. Effective use of this opportunity creates the foundation for the student's future personal and social success.



According to the criterion "Knowledge activity": According to the analysis, the majority of students are moderately engaged in knowledge (50%), but 20% remain at a low level. This may be due to the lack of elements of inquiry in the tasks provided by teachers.

Level of "reflexivity": 40% of students have a high level of reflective thinking, but 15% have a very low level of this ability. Answering reflection questions and self-analysis activities are not consistently integrated into lessons.

"Social cooperation" capacity: 25% of students have low ability to work in groups. This is explained by the lack of regular use of social activities (role-playing, group discussions).

On "Emotional readiness": 18% of students have low scores in terms of taking initiative and maintaining

participation. This indicates that emotional support in classes is insufficient.

"Ethical judgment skills": 30% of students scored highly on this criterion. At the same time, 22% of students rated this ability low. There is not enough training in ethical decision-making.

To increase cognitive activity:

Question and answer exercises based on problem situations;

- Open-ended questions like "What do you think?";
- Use games based on ingenuity and observation.

To develop reflective thinking:

- At the end of each lesson, evaluate in written or oral form questions such as "What did I learn today?", "What was difficult?";
- Keeping personal portfolios and diaries.

To build social cooperation skills:

- Cooperative learning methods: "Think-Pair-Share", project development in small groups;
- Exchange of ideas, debate and discussion exercises.

To enhance emotional readiness:

- Motivation based on positive psychology, engaging in lessons through play;
- Positive communication and recognition techniques that reduce stress.

To develop ethical assessment capacity:

- Asking controversial questions based on moral stories and stories;
- Discussions on evaluating life situations and making ethical decisions.

The primary education stage is a foundational period in which the psychological, moral and social foundations of personality development are formed, and the age characteristics of students at this stage play a decisive role in the process of forming universal educational activities. The results of the study show that the natural need for knowledge, the desire to actively learn, emotional sensitivity and the desire for social activity of children aged 6–10 create favorable conditions for the effective formation of universal activities.

Psychological and pedagogical literature notes that the cognitive and affective development processes of primary school students can be the basis for activities such as reflective thinking, expressing one's own opinion, finding direction in problematic situations, and making moral choices (Piaget, Vygotsky, Erikson, etc.). Therefore, to assess the level of readiness for universal educational activities in children of this age, not only academic knowledge, but also indicators of socio-emotional, moral-cognitive, and aesthetic-creative potential should be taken

into account.

Analyzing individual students' situations based on criteria that determine the level of readiness for universal activities (cognitive activity, reflexivity, social interaction, emotional readiness, moral assessment ability) increases the accuracy and effectiveness of the pedagogical approach. In this process, the teacher should enrich his/her activities with person-centered, reflective, and empathetic approaches.

Also, the following conditions are of great importance for the formation and development of readiness for universal educational activities: a stimulating learning environment, game and project-based activities, positive communication, recognition of personal success and a system of assessment based on reflection. All this is necessary to ensure the psychological protection of the student, his formation as an independent and active person.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, through a thorough analysis of the age characteristics of primary school students and the gradual formation of universal activities appropriate to them, the educational, social and cultural effectiveness of the educational process is consistently ensured. This, in turn, becomes the main methodological principle of educating the student as an educated, morally mature and active social subject.

In addition, achieving educational goals through universal educational activities means, by its very nature, transforming the process itself into educational content. That is, through each educational task, activity, project, discussion, or game, the child is instilled not only with knowledge, but also with skills such as values, etiquette, aesthetic feelings, critical thinking, social empathy, hard work, and loyalty to the Motherland.

Through pedagogically sound guidance of universal educational activities in the primary school period, children's personal world - their beliefs, attitudes, intentions and feelings of responsibility - is enriched. Therefore, the education provided through these activities acts as a bridge to life beyond education.

Methodologically, there are the following practical possibilities in conducting education based on universal activities:

- develop thinking and choice skills based on ethically problematic situations;
- forming a personal position in the process of self-assessment and reflection;
- increasing sociability through project, role-playing, and group work;
- integrating elements of national values, traditions, and culture into the content of lessons.

These opportunities create a basis for the educator to educate the student as an independent thinker, a problem-solver, an understanding of his role and mission in the community, and a socially responsible person. Especially in modern society, when the need to simultaneously form various social, emotional, cultural and moral skills in children is increasing, universal educational activities can provide a comprehensive response to these needs.

One of the conclusions identified in the framework of this study is that the organization of the educational process through universal educational activities in the primary school is a systematic work that is associated not only with the methodological approach of the teacher, but also with the entire educational environment (classroom climate, cooperation with parents, the approach of the school administration). As a result of the implementation of such an approach, the student is formed not just as a learner, but as a person who can manage himself, find his way in life and be useful to his society.

Analysis of international experience and national practice also proves that conducting universal educational activities inextricably linked with upbringing is an incomparable pedagogical tool for forming civic consciousness, intercultural communication skills, aesthetic taste, and critical thinking in students.

Thus, achieving educational goals through universal educational activities is a priority direction of today's education system, a practical means of forming a comprehensively developed personality, a reliable path to personal and social success. Through their proper organization and effective use, we have the opportunity to raise a well-rounded generation that is not only knowledgeable in education, but also conscious, educated, cultured, and aware of its own path in life.

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