

Development of Communication Skills Through Interdisciplinary Integration and Collaborative Project Activities In “Mehrli Maktab”

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ABSTRACT

This article highlights the issues of developing communication skills among students in the conditions of “Mehrli Maktab”, established for children undergoing long-term medical treatment, from the perspective of a practicing educator. Taking into account the specific characteristics of hospital pedagogy, the effectiveness of interdisciplinary integration and collaborative project activities in the socialisation of students is substantiated. Practical experience shows that small-scale projects organised through interdisciplinary connections reduce children's emotional stress and foster their skills in engaging in effective communication with peers and educators.

Keywords: Mehrli Maktab, hospital pedagogy, interdisciplinary integration, collaborative project, communication skills, social adaptation, psychosocial rehabilitation.

INTRODUCTION

Organising the educational process for children undergoing long-term medical treatment fundamentally differs in methodology and environment from traditional school settings [4]. In practice, we are required to adopt an approach that strictly accounts for each student's health status and medical procedure schedule. Due to chronic and severe illnesses, students in inpatient conditions are isolated for extended periods not only from their classmates but also from the social environment they are accustomed to [5]. It is natural that this forced isolation and ongoing medical procedures exert a serious negative impact on children's psychological and emotional well-being [2]. Consequently, social maladaptation states—such as high levels of anxiety and avoidance of communication—become clearly pronounced among students [1]. In such circumstances, the primary task of the teacher is not merely to instruct the child, but to assist them in overcoming communication barriers. The “Mehrli Maktab” state educational institution, established in

Uzbekistan, has been fulfilling the responsible task of providing continuous education and upbringing to children undergoing long-term treatment.

Our experience as practicing educators working in hospital settings indicates that developing the communication skills of such students is the highest priority direction of education. Interdisciplinary integration and collaborative project activities applied in the educational process positively divert children's attention away from their illness and painful medical procedures [4]. As observed in our practical work, joint tasks act as an impetus for the emergence of communication and friendly bonds among children. Through an interdisciplinary approach, educational content is presented in an engaging manner, enhancing students' cognitive activity and educational motivation [3]. This, in turn, reignites the student's interest in learning and their surrounding environment. Collaborative project work, on the other hand, fosters an atmosphere of mutual psychological support among

students [5]. As a result, every child begins to feel like an equal and valued member of the group.

The main objective of this article is to demonstrate, based on practical experience, the potential for developing students' communication skills through the organisation of interdisciplinary integration and project work in "Mehrlı Maktab". Throughout the study, the unique opportunities of hospital pedagogy and the mechanisms of student socialisation are thoroughly analyzed [6]. Furthermore, effective pedagogical methods applied in our practice and their impact on children's emotional stability are substantiated. According to our observations, a correctly chosen methodical approach restores students' educational and social activity faster than expected. This research elucidates practical mechanisms for forming communication culture and social adaptability in children undergoing long-term treatment [7]. We hope that the presented experience and methodical recommendations will serve as a valuable practical resource for educators operating within the hospital education system.

METHODS

In the process of research and practical experience, the educational and upbringing work carried out with students studying at "Mehrlı Maktab" and undergoing long-term medical treatment was comprehensively analyzed. In organising lessons, the integration of subjects—namely combining the possibilities of fine arts, natural sciences, literature, and digital technologies—as well as the methodology of implementing small collaborative projects were put into practice [4]. This integrated approach serves to facilitate the assimilation of educational material in a light and engaging format tailored to children's physical capabilities. As practicing educators, we paid special attention to adapting tasks across various subjects to hospital conditions during every academic hour. For instance, illustrating a fairy-tale plot from a literature lesson through fine arts and creating a small presentation using digital tools aroused great interest among the children. Such complex activities develop students' logical, emotional, and creative thinking simultaneously. Most importantly, joint creative tasks naturally generated a need for communication and mutual cooperation among students.

In building the methodological framework of the research, extensive use was made of pedagogical observation, evaluation of student activity during the project process,

and methods for determining their emotional state and level of communicativeness [6]. During our observations, we systematically evaluated not only the level of knowledge acquisition, but also the speed at which children engaged in communication with peers and their emotional stability. In accordance with the students' physical and psychological conditions, project tasks were planned in a highly flexible format and for short durations. This method was specifically chosen to prevent fatigue and physical strain in children and to maintain their mental alertness. Practice demonstrated that collaborative tasks with short and clear goals yield the highest pedagogical effectiveness in hospital settings. Additionally, the schedule of medical procedures was fully taken into account during lessons, and the pace of learning was individually adapted for each child. This methodical approach boosted students' self-confidence, enabling the step-by-step formation of their social adaptability skills.

RESULTS

During our practical activities at "Mehrlı Maktab," interdisciplinary integrated collaborative projects such as "Our Magical World" and "Nature and Man" were organized and implemented [4]. In these projects, students were divided into small groups and combined elements of fine arts, literature, and digital technologies to jointly prepare presentations and creative works on open topics. As practicing educators, our experience revealed that when project topics are selected in alignment with children's age characteristics and emotional needs, their interest increases manifold. During joint practical sessions, children not only completed the given tasks but also gained the opportunity to freely share their ideas. Mutual cooperation within small groups fostered a sense of collective responsibility and peer support in every student. At the conclusion of the sessions, presentations of the creative works prepared by the students were held, and each of their achievements and efforts was fittingly encouraged. Consequently, these projects transformed the learning process in hospital conditions into an interactive and lively communication space.

Pedagogical observations revealed that in the initial stage of project activities, the majority of students exhibited shyness, anxiety, and depression when entering friendly communication [1]. However, during joint creative and cognitive work, their communicative activity increased step by step. According to our observations, students learned to actively exchange ideas, listen to one another,

and sincerely express their feelings not only with the teacher, but also with peers receiving treatment alongside them. Collaborative project tasks restored children's confidence in themselves and their capabilities, significantly reducing their emotional strain and anxiety levels. In particular, the opportunity for constant communication served to overcome the feeling of social isolation and ensured mental alertness. At the end of the lessons, positive changes in students' moods, openness to communication, and high motivation toward future activities were clearly evident. This practically proved the high psychopedagogical and social effectiveness of interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches in the context of "Mehrlı Maktab".

DISCUSSION

The application of interdisciplinary integration in hospital pedagogy makes it possible to increase educational efficiency while reducing the study load [4]. It is well known that children undergoing long-term treatment tire quickly; therefore, holistic and engaging project activities that combine several subjects develop both their cognitive and emotional spheres equally [4]. In our practical work, it was also confirmed that administering integrated lessons in measured doses according to children's mental and physical conditions yields high results. The multi-branched and rigid lesson schedules of traditional education prove burdensome for a student in a hospital setting. For this reason, creating projects at the intersection of several subjects provides an opportunity to teach the child without educational strain. Analysis of conducted lessons shows that such an approach prevents feelings of fatigue and exhaustion in children. As a result, students feel at ease during the lesson process and assimilate new knowledge with high interest and enthusiasm.

Collaborative project activity serves as a bridge in establishing social relationships among children [6]. In the process of jointly creating a specific creative product, students develop teamwork, mutual assistance, and a culture of friendly communication [7]. As practicing educators, we became convinced that for a child in a constant medical environment, uniting with a peer toward a common goal is the best form of rehabilitation. Even small joint successes restore children's faith in society and their own strengths. This, in turn, significantly eases their eventual return to regular school and social environments [5]. In conclusion, it can be emphasized that in hospital conditions, every project activity should be directed not

only at imparting knowledge, but primarily at the child's emotional recovery and the formation of communication skills [2].

CONCLUSION

Introducing interdisciplinary integration and collaborative project activities in "Mehrlı Maktab" constitutes an exceptionally effective pedagogical mechanism for developing the social and communication skills of children undergoing long-term treatment. Practical activities and pedagogical observations demonstrated that this approach enhances educational motivation while directly serving to ensure students' psycho-emotional stability and overcome compulsory social isolation. As practicing educators, it is worth noting that organizing the educational process in flexible and interactive formats within hospital settings does not merely impart knowledge; it restores children's sense of being active members of society and rebuilds their self-confidence. Jointly executed creative and cognitive projects created a friendly communication environment among students, significantly reducing illness-related stress and anxiety levels. Therefore, in the practice of hospital pedagogy, it is expedient to broader apply interdisciplinary and project-based approaches, systematically improve the methodical support in this direction, and enhance the professional skills of educators.

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