INTERACTIVE METHODS FOR TRAINING CHILDREN FROM PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Abstract

The article discusses the problem of using up-to-date and new methods in primary school to present the learning content in an accessible and interesting way for small students. The challenges and opportunities for more effective primary school-age education through the use of interactive methods are analysed and highlighted. In order to achieve the goal of the research, a survey was carried out, which goes through and analyses the opinion of primary school teachers on the positive aspects of interactive methods designed primarily for educational purposes in primary school.

As a result of the research carried out and the analysis of the results obtained, we came to the conclusion that the application of interactive methods in primary school reveals opportunities for teachers to present the learning content in an attractive and interesting way which improves the motivation for learning among young pupils and increases their willingness to participate in learning activities.

Keywords: education, training, interactive methods, primary school education.

1 INTRODUCTION

Modern trends in education are aimed at changing the position of students, turning them from passive into active and adequate participants in the overall educational process. Understanding the idea of organizing the educational environment in modern primary school involves organizing of a training that focuses on the student, his/her abilities, needs and interests in the learning process. These actually existing grounds highlight the need to apply modern and innovative methods of organizing student-centred learning.

The new paradigm, the philosophical foundation of which being constructivism and humanistic education, defines a change in the primary school's educational space, including the renewal of educational goals and tasks - training methodology (from monologue to dialogue), educational technologies (from stimulus - reaction to interaction), a change in pedagogical dialogue and interaction, in the role of the teacher and the student. [1]

Educational reality shows that the proper organization and planning of learning content in primary school, where basic knowledge, skills and competences are built, leads to better results, more effective learning, and fosters positive learning motivation. The very concept of motivation can be expressed in general as a “targeted activity” of the personality and, on the other hand, the purposeful development of the motives is carried out in the organization and the content of the educational activity.

It is well-known that in the initial stage of learning it is important to create conditions for forming positive inner motivation among young pupils, and they are motivated to learn when they participate in what is happening around them because they feel safe and confident in their actions. Children need opportunities to explore and discover information that is meaningful to them, and also to understand the meaning of the learned knowledge, as well as the usefulness of the acquired knowledge and skills. Such training can be implemented in an educational environment that is interesting and engaging, where learning will bring pleasure to all participants, taking into account the age specifics of pupils at each specific stage of their development. Such an environment is built on the basis of mutual respect between teacher and student and evolves in line with the strengths of children and not their weaknesses.

“Modernization of the initial stage of education is a serious challenge to rethink the pedagogical reality in its most important aspects: goal setting, learning content, educational process.” [2]
In this context, the organization of an innovative educational environment stands out as an important factor in the implementation of the pedagogical interactions and the orientation of the students in the new knowledge that will contribute to the implementation of the idea of innovation in training.

That is why the difficult task of leaving the traditional training and organizing the learning activities in a new way is assigned to the teacher who must purposefully and in a well-organized manner prepare and plan the learning activities. Upon such a change the teacher is placed in a situation where under his leadership an atmosphere of trust and cooperation necessary for the implementation of a successful, engaging and complete training, is provided.

In other words, a young pupil needs a systematisation of his/her own experience, which of course is adequate to his/her individual personality. The pupil easily learns and becomes convinced by the laws and relationships that are experienced and discovered in his/her own way. He/she needs specific knowledge and common approaches to achieve them. It is here that the teacher's help is sought, which has to meet specific requirements, always specifically individual, stimulating towards certain conditions, very discreet, and sometimes abstract. [2]

It can be said that the interactive learning methods possess the constructive capacity to implement and update the educational process in general.

1.1 Nature of interactive methods

The word "method" is a complex concept and derives from the Greek word "methodos" which literally means a way to something, to achieve a certain goal through a certain activity. The method of training is seen as a process of interaction between the teacher and the pupils, resulting in the transfer and learning of knowledge, skills and relationships through the learning content.

Recently gaining great popularity, interactive learning methods have emerged as innovation in education, and above all as an expression of the need for novelty in the learning process.

Interactive methods – (from English, "inter" - mutually, between and "act" – action) are a form of interaction between all participants in the learning process. In other words, the learning process takes place in conditions of active interaction between all participants in the process, the teacher and the pupil are equal subjects of the training. [3]

Interactive methods are also seen as the most advanced form of active methods. In contrast, however, to active, interactive methods focus on greater interaction between pupils, not just interaction with the teacher, in other words, the activity of students in the learning process. Therefore, the main components of interactive lessons are interactive exercises and activities that are performed by the pupils.

Interactive learning as a form of cognitive activity implies setting specific goals and creating comfortable conditions for learners to feel their success in performing productive actions in the learning process itself, and to create a basis of competences for solving different pedagogical problems. Interactive training is a training where direct interaction of learners with the educational environment takes place, in order to acquire new experience and knowledge. It organizes an interactive learning environment that naturally or artificially creates an environment and an atmosphere for learning, encouraging participants actively and deliberately to interact by motivating their cognitive activity through various pedagogical tools.

"Interactive educational environment is a way of organizing the environment and interpersonal relationships on the principles of child-oriented learning." [4]

From what has been said so far, we can say that interactive learning methods have the capacity to modernize the educational process. Competently implemented in primary school, they can reveal new aspects of enriching the pupil's personality and stimulating new forms of communication and knowledge confirming their high pedagogical value.

1.2 Problem formulation

The issue of activating the learning activity of pupils from primary school age and beyond is one of the most significant and up-to-date in the modern theory and practice of learning.

The dynamics of social development concerns modern training, which requires the use and application of new ways and approaches for the organization of learning activities, which imply a change in the old
educational model and direct the efforts of educators towards the construction of a new one in the essence of which is the idea of the personal approach.

On the other hand, unlike traditional teaching methods, the creation of an interactive educational environment and the use of interactive learning are an alternative to traditional learning. Interactive learning lies on the principle of multilateral communication, and can be said to be characterized by the absence of unilateral communication.

Relying on the well-known assertion that learning is not just a process of receiving, accumulating and acquiring information, but is an active process of acquiring knowledge and skills, our research intentions unfold in the context of the idea of provoking learning in an interesting and innovative environment through interactive methods to influence pupils and to create positive attitudes towards learning, and to achieve greater efficiency in learning.

In interactive methods, learning is focused and implemented through experiences that include pupils. It is not just a process of accumulation of learning information and the acquisition of knowledge and skills, but learning in a situation where something is being experienced. [5]

This gives us reason to explore the problem of applying interactive learning methods in primary school practice, which is extremely relevant. We rely on the fact that gradual and step-by-step introduction of new technologies changes traditional learning and enriches interactive methods, as multiple virtual environments are used to teach the learning content and implement the learning process.

This study examines the challenges and opportunities for more effective education of the children of primary school age through the application of interactive methods, as they form the skills necessary for modern man to generate ideas, formulate and verify hypotheses, discuss, and to take decisions.

Based on all said above, we can say that interactive methods contribute to student-centred learning interactions, which served us in organizing this study.

1.3 Purpose of the study

to trace and analyse the opinion of primary school teachers about the positive aspects of interactive methods designed primarily for educational purposes in elementary school.

We take into account that by the interactive methods the learning process is updated, its attractiveness is increased and a motivation for learning in the students is formed, which in turn contributes to the building of a modern student personality.

To accomplish the goal set we have formulated the following tasks:

- To investigate and analyse in theory and practice the problem related to interactive methods and their application in elementary school;
- To examine the experience of teachers in creating an innovative educational environment for carrying out learning activities using interactive methods.

2 METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the goal of the study and carrying out the tasks, a questionnaire was given to the general teachers, which in essence contained 6 questions with three possible answers expressing their opinion. The questionnaire is suggested as follows:

**Teacher Questionnaire**

Dear colleagues, this survey is conducted in connection with a study on "Interactive methods in the education of children of primary school age". The questionnaire is anonymous and the data will only be used for research purposes. Please note down the answer that is valid for you. Thank you in advance for the participation!

1. Are you familiar with the nature of interactive methods?
   - a) Yes;
   - b) Rather yes;
   - c) No.
2 In what do you think interactivity is expressed?
   a) Active class interaction;
   b) Interesting learning environment;
   c) Opportunity for each student to express himself/herself;

3 Do you apply interactive learning methods?
   a) Yes;
   b) Sometimes;
   c) Very rarely, but yes

4 How your pupils accept learning content presented by interactive methods?
   a) They show interest;
   b) They are actively involved in learning activities;
   c) Most of them are passive.

5 Do your pupils learn educational content presented by interactive methods more easily and accessibly?
   a) Yes;
   b) Not quite;
   c) No.

6 Would you use interactive methods with priority in the training of your pupils and why?
   a) Yes, because ……...
   b) Rather not, because …
   c) No, because …

From an organizational point of view, the survey was conducted in writing and anonymously, the questionnaire cards were filled independently by the researcher, and the teachers willingly presented their opinion and explained their answers with additional examples. The survey was attended by 50 general teachers. The educators involved in the survey are aged between 28 and 54 years. The distribution of teachers by age was as follows: teachers from 28 to 35 were 12 (24%), from 36 to 41 were 15 (30%), from 42 to 47 were 18 (36%) and from 48 to 54 were 5 (10%).

It should be noted that the survey was conducted with primary school teachers using interactive methods for organizing an innovative environment, which unequivocally reveals the potential of an environment for greater engagement, awareness and interest in learning among students.

3 RESULTS

The analysis of the results of the survey was based on its specificity. Questions and answers of teachers are presented in the tables.

| Table 1 Are you familiar with the nature of interactive methods? |
|---------------------|-----|-----|
| Yes                | 42  | 84% |
| Rather yes         | 8   | 16% |
| No                 | -   | -   |

On the first question, 84% of the teachers interviewed share their knowledge about the nature of the interactive methods, 8% of them are to some extent aware of their nature. Negative answer is not given by any of the general teachers, which unequivocally shows their knowledge of interactive methods.
Table 2: In what do you think interactivity is expressed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active class interaction;</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting learning environment;</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for each student to express</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>himself/herself</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the answers to the second question show that 56% of the teachers state the opinion that interactivity is expressed in the active interaction between the students, 18% report the formation of an interesting and engaging learning environment and 26% point out the creation of opportunities for each pupil to express themselves. "Interactivity creates an interesting learning environment, students participate actively in all learning activities by cooperating and helping thus developing personal qualities, ability for mutual help, and support to those who do not do so well, they learn to work in a team." (R.P.)

Table 3: Do you apply interactive learning methods?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very rarely, but yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

41% of respondents answering the third question use with priority in their teaching practice interactive methods as well as interactive technologies: "I support innovative learning through interactive technologies (tablet, smartphone) and the use of electronic textbooks because electronic resources are a fun way to discover, learn, summarize, exercise in reading, for example, in Bulgarian, and verification of understanding." (D.P.) Only 14% do not always, but only sometimes use interactive methods, and only 4% include these methods in their work.

Table 4: How your pupils accept learning content presented by interactive methods?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They show interest</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are actively involved in learning activities</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of them are passive</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
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</table>

On the fourth question 78% of the teachers state that the presentation of the learning contents by interactive methods stimulates the students to participate in the educational activities, which increases their motivation for learning, 22% of the teachers consider that children are interested in different than the traditional presentation of the lesson. None of the teachers share the view that children are a passive during interactive activities.

Table 5: Do your pupils learn educational content presented by interactive methods more easily and accessibly?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not quite</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the results of the fifth question, 82% of the teachers surveyed explicitly stated that pupils learn more easily and more accessibly the learning content presented by the use of interactive methods, which, in the opinion of the teachers, is due to the creation of an interesting learning environment. The percentage of these teachers who share the view that their students do not always learn lessons with interactive methods more easily is few.
Table 6 Would you use interactive methods with priority in the training of your pupils and why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes, because ....</th>
<th>45</th>
<th>90%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rather not, because ..</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, because ..</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
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</table>

On the last sixth question of the survey, 90% of the respondents declare that they would use the interactive methods with a priority in their work, and with willingness add also: "Yes, I use them with a priority because the knowledge and skills included in the curriculum are learned permanently and without difficulties. When pupils interact, they not only learn knowledge, but also help each other in learning. This is achieved with group work. Cross-curricular relations and game activities bring positive attitude, brighten up, reassure children, and intuitively enable them to show their best." (DM.)

Organized learning environments through the prioritized use of interactive methods contribute to the personal development of the participants and the personalization of their knowledge, based on constant interaction and engagement, as well as continuous search for new solutions. The great dynamics of the interactions and relationships of participants in the learning process contributes to the adoption of rules, norms of behaviour, knowledge, skills, self-control, and self-assessment when accepting or rejecting assigned requirements. The active involvement of pupils in the learning process through interactive methods opens new ways of self-knowledge, reveals feelings of empathy and tolerance.

4 CONCLUSION

Considering interactive methods as primarily intended for educational purposes in primary school, this means that they provide a renovation of the learning process, increasing its attractiveness and the formation of motivation among young pupils, which in turn contributes to the building of a modern pupil personality. The application of interactive methods in primary school creates learning situations in which the pupil learns to think deeply, creatively, and flexibly. They contribute to mastering knowledge, shaping skills and competencies by introducing students to situations where they can jointly solve problems, participate in discussions, and freely express their opinions.

• The problem of interactive methods and their application in elementary school is up-to-date and oriented towards the objectives of educational change, as by their priority use the interest, the activity, the engagement and the ability of the young pupils to acquire knowledge and skills are enhanced; and an opportunity to apply them in life situations.

• In the conditions for ensuring quality education and the formation of a positive educational environment, the experience and the great desire of the primary school teachers are highlighted in organizing training by the use of interactive methods in order to create an atmosphere of attention and the active participation of all pupils in the educational activities.

Interactive methods help to change the position of primary school pupils who are no longer passive listeners, but become active participants in their own learning and development.

REFERENCES