Preschool Aged the Children's Aesthetic Education Methods: An Integrative Approach and Practical Assessment

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Abstract. *This article discusses the theoretical foundations, principles, and practical methods of aesthetic education of preschool children based on an integrative approach. Aesthetic education forms the child's skills in perceiving, feeling, evaluating, and creatively expressing beauty, and serves the development of emotional stability, speech, thinking, and fine motor skills. The methods used were the analysis of normative documents and pedagogical sources, observation of classes, and the modeling of a practical model consisting of the components 'environment-activity-communication-evaluation'. As a result, systematic recommendations for the organization of aesthetic education in preschool conditions and an observation-based assessment rubric were proposed.*

Key words: *Aesthetic education, preschool age, artistic taste, creativity, integrative approach, visual activity, musical education, dramatization, and rubric.*

1. Introduction

Preschool age (approximately 3-7 years) is a stage when the child's sensory and emotional experience is rapidly enriched, interest and imagination are strongly manifested, and play activities are leading. During this period, aesthetic education develops the child's ability to see, feel, and evaluate beauty through the perception of color, shape, sound, rhythm, and images. Aesthetic education is not limited to art classes; it is also expressed in the child's daily culture (order, cleanliness, behavior), attitude to nature, and in the process of play and labor.

Note that aesthetic experience has a positive effect on the general development of children (speech, memory, attention, fine motor skills, and emotional-intellectual state) . Dewey, explaining art as an experience, shows that aesthetic perception is closely related to personal experience (Dewey, 1934). Eisner, on the other hand, emphasizes that art education develops subtle forms of thinking (Eisner, 2002).

In practice, some problems are encountered: one-sided organization of classes (copying the example), excessive emphasis on the result, limited time and materials for free creativity, the use of evaluation in the form of 'good-bad', and weak family cooperation. Therefore, it is urgent to plan aesthetic education based on an integrative approach and enrich it methodologically.

The goal is to systematize methods of aesthetic education of preschool children, propose an integrative practical model and develop a rubric (criteria table) for evaluation. Tasks: (1) identify the content and principles of aesthetic education; (2) group practical methods; (3) recommend an integrative training algorithm; (4) develop observation and evaluation criteria.

2. Methods

This article is of a theoretical-practical nature and the following methods were used:

- Analysis of regulatory documents: state requirements for preschool education and requirements related to aesthetic education in curricula were analyzed.

- Analysis of scientific and pedagogical sources: concepts on aesthetic education, creative development, and art education (approaches of organizations such as UNESCO, NAEYC) were summarized.

- Modeling pedagogical observation: observation indicators were developed for the child's participation, interest, creative independence, and emotional reactions during the training process.

- Modeling and methodological construction: An integrative training scenario and assessment rubric were developed based on the 'learning-activity-communication-evaluation' (MAE) model.

The ethical approach was based on the principles of not forcing the child, respecting individual differences, creating a psychologically safe environment, and using encouraging feedback.

3. Result

As a result of the analysis, a practical model of MFMB (Environment - Activity - Communication - Evaluation) was proposed for the effective organization of aesthetic education. Each component of the model was clarified in accordance with the characteristics of preschool age, and the methods were systematized.

1) Environment: creating an aesthetic environment in the group room (color harmony, 'creative corner', 'mini-gallery', seasonal nature table), safe and accessible placement of materials increases the child's independent choice and experience.

2) Activity: aesthetic education methods were grouped into 6 blocks: (a) visual activities (painting, applique, collage, clay); (b) musical education (listening, rhythm, movement); (c) artistic word (tale, poem, expressive reading); (d) dramatization and theatrical elements; (e) aesthetic perception of nature; (f) design-construction and practical decoration.

3) Communication: it was determined that the aesthetic culture of the teacher's speech and attitude (gentle tone, figurative questions, appreciation of the process), collaborative creativity (pairs and small groups), and homework with parents (10-minute creativity) enhance effectiveness.

4) Evaluation: Instead of dividing the result into 'good' and 'bad', a rubric was developed that shows the dynamics of development. The rubric covers criteria such as color/shape perception, rhythm, artistic expression, creative independence, culture of working with materials, cooperation, and perception of nature (Appendix A).

Sample integrative exercise (brief outline).

Theme: 'Autumn colors and the wind's melody' (ages 5-6).

Objective: to feel the harmony of colors, express musical rhythm in movement, and create a collage based on observation.

Equipment: dried leaves, colored paper, glue, paint, sponge, quiet piece of music.

Stages (20-25 minutes): 1) observation (3 minutes) - leaf colors and 2-3 qualities; 2) music (4 minutes) - rhythm clap/movement; 3) visual work (12 minutes) - leaf collage and background; 4) presentation (4 minutes) - 'my work' 1-2 sentences; 5) conclusion (2 minutes) - reflection.

4. Discussion

The discussion suggests that aesthetic education is most effective when it integrates the arts and the culture of everyday life. The NAEYC's 'developmentally appropriate practice' approach also emphasizes that children's learning should be organized around active experiences and play, with the teacher acting as a guiding companion (NAEYC, 2020).

UNESCO documents see art education as a means of developing creativity, cultural awareness and social cohesion (UNESCO, 2006; UNESCO, 2010). In this context, the MFMB model serves to organize aesthetic education as a systematic pedagogical process, rather than a set of separate activities.

One of the most common mistakes in practice is the dominance of the "copying the sample" method. This reduces the child's initiative, choice, and creative independence. Instead, the teacher should encourage open-ended questions (What did you draw? Why did you choose that color?), appreciation of the process (It's good that you tried!) and free choice of material.

Family cooperation strengthens aesthetic education: reading fairy tales together at home, listening to music, observing nature on a walk, and performing simple decorating tasks form a stable aesthetic taste in a child. When using digital content, it is recommended to choose age-appropriate, non-violent , short, and educational materials, and to moderate screen time.

5. Conclusion

Aesthetic education of preschool children is a complex process that develops a child's perception of beauty, emotional state, speech, and creative independence. The article proposes a model of MFMB for the effective organization of aesthetic education and justifies a rubric-based approach to assessment.

The following recommendations are proposed: (1) conscious creation of an aesthetic environment; (2) integrated use of visual activities, music, artistic expression, dramatization, nature observation, and design-construction games; (3) formation of a culture of aesthetic communication; (4) assessment of development dynamics through observation.

In the future, it is advisable to test this model on a practical basis, systematically collect data on rubric criteria, and create a bank of methodological materials.

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