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Exploring Pedagogical Strategies: Tailored Techniques for Assessing Children's Developmental Capacities

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Abstract
The article proposes methods for assessing and research methods for the zone of proximal development in children with disabilities. The system of work of the Department of Innovative Educational Technologies and Educational Pedagogy for preparing students to use assessment methods and methods for studying the zone of proximal development when organizing work with children with disabilities is presented.
Key Words: *correctional education system, children with disabilities, zone of proximal development, principles of formative experiment, case assignments for students.*

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Contemporary challenges in the sphere of educating and guiding children with disabilities underscore the urgency of correctional education and training. Consequently, an advanced training system has been formulated to equip educators with the requisite skills to effectively engage with such children. This system aims to instill in teachers the readiness to employ efficient technologies, tools, and methodologies within the correctional and developmental framework. Curricular components within these teacher training programs specifically address the psychological dimensions inherent in the development of children with disabilities, emphasizing the need to acquaint students with pertinent psychological terminologies and concepts.

L.S. Vygotsky introduced the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) within the context of his exploration into the intricate relationship between learning and development. This theoretical framework posits that the learning process is intricately linked with the emergence of novel mental constructs and the refinement of existing ones. Notably, learning can precede developmental stages, propelling the latter forward and engendering fresh cognitive formations.

In seminar discussions, various aspects concerning preschool-aged children (6-7 years old) and their psychological development are addressed. This period represents a critical phase characterized by the rapid formation of personal attributes. Researchers should focus on several key facets during this phase, including:

1. Cultivation of moral concepts and ideals.
2. Establishment of moral self-awareness principles.
3. Forging a distinct moral standpoint.
4. Cultivation of personal and moral self-regulation capabilities.
5. Transitioning behavioral patterns to manage social conduct.
6. Heightened comprehension of behavioral rules and norms.
7. Advancement in articulating actions through specific moral categories.
8. The child's inclination toward self-exploration, self-assessment, and evaluation of others.
9. Aspiration for acknowledgment and endorsement from peers.
10. Yearning for commendation and affirmation.
11. Striving for self-validation.
12. Pursuit of independence.
13. Elevated levels of expectations and demands.
14. Development of personal attributes encompassing:

- Empathy - attentiveness to others' concerns, distress, experiences, achievements, and setbacks.
- Compassion and concern for others.
- Demonstrating initiative, determination, and self-reliance.

1. Cultivation of enterprising personal traits.
2. Increased need for social interaction, prompting the child to initiate and expand connections with peers.

3. Capacity to engage in joint activities and communicate effectively with others.

4. Acquiring fundamental norms and regulations governing group behavior.

5. Identifying children's learning-oriented needs.

6. Formation of motivational elements pertinent to educational endeavors.

7. Nurturing creative aptitudes, facilitating the ability to innovate and transform their environment.

8. Recording internal mental processes and operations.

9. Advancement in imaginative capabilities, enabling the creation, alteration, and deliberate manipulation of mental images.

10. Development of symbolic skills, encompassing the utilization of various sign systems and executing symbolic operations across mathematical, linguistic, logical, and related domains.

11. Integration of both external and internal actions coalesces into a unified intellectual activity, comprising:

- Attention synthesis: the adept management and regulation of internal and external action plans.
- Memory fusion: the amalgamation of external and internal structuring when absorbing and reproducing material.
- Cognitive amalgamation: the convergence of visually effective, visually figurative, and verbally logical problem-solving approaches into a cohesive thinking process.

1. Interlinking imagination, cognition, and speech involves the capacity to evoke and deliberately manipulate mental images through verbal self-guidance.

2. The emergence and effective operation of inner speech as a cognitive tool.

3. The child's ability to discern the reasons for their achievements, considering both their innate abilities and the effort invested.

4. Participation in rule-based role-playing games.

The apex of a child's personal development transitions to the psychological developments during primary school years.

1. Conscious establishment of success-driven goals and the volitional regulation of behavior to attain these objectives.

2. Tenacity in pursuing set goals.

3. Deliberate control of one's actions, allowing behavior management based on decisions, intentions, and long-term goals.

4. Attainment of a heightened self-awareness termed "internal position."

5. Cultivation of a moral code adhered to consistently, irrespective of prevailing circumstances.

6. Subjugation of motives for action, ensuring that established goals or emerging intentions govern behavior, averting distractions from peripheral concerns.

7. Cultivation of motivation for success or avoidance of failure.

8. Cultivation of a balanced self-esteem.

9. Conscious acknowledgment of one's capabilities and aptitudes.

10. Strengthening confidence in personal achievements.

11. Industriousness and self-reliance.

12. Conscious attitude toward oneself, others, events, and responsibilities.
13. Recognition of adult authority and acceptance of their evaluations.
14. Regulation of interpersonal relationships.
15. Aspiration for commendation from significant adults.
16. Social prestige acknowledgment.
17. Broadening and deepening of knowledge, enhancing the child's skills and capabilities.
18. Demonstration of both general and specialized abilities across various activities:

- General abilities showcased in the rapid acquisition of new knowledge, skills, and aptitudes.
- Specialized abilities observed in the depth of understanding individual school subjects, specific work activities, and communication.
- Refinement of the actual level of aspirations and the dynamic formation depicting shifts in selecting challenging or facile tasks based on successes and failures.

The evaluation of developmental stages encompasses not solely the attained capacities but also necessitates consideration of evolving functions. Evolving functions, termed ZPD, and mature functions denote the level of current development. The actual developmental stage denotes a child's potential to transition from individual capability to collaborative problem-solving—an exceptionally sensitive indicator reflecting developmental dynamics and achievements.

This level is gauged through tasks independently tackled by the child using established and mature functions, representing the extent of the child's mastery of fundamental learning skills. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) framework involves an assessment sequence: initially, the current developmental level is appraised, followed by assigning more intricate tasks for joint resolution with an adult.

It is well-established that, with adult guidance, a child can achieve more and solve more intricate problems than independently. However, the child's capability under such guidance is not boundless. As tasks escalate in complexity, there comes a point where, even with adult assistance, the child confronts challenges beyond their capability. The disparity between tasks resolved with adult aid and autonomously managed tasks defines the ZPD.

For instance, if a child can only form simple generalizations independently but, with adult support, manages complex generalizations, it indicates that the development of abstraction, distraction, and generalization processes lies within the sensitive period or ZPD.

Discrepancies within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) wield considerable influence on children's learning, overshadowing the significance of the actual developmental level.

Central to the learning process is the emergence of novelty within a child's activities, which is governed by the ZPD, delineating the realm of transitions accessible to the child from

their present state to new domains. Teaching a child is contingent upon their inherent capacity for learning, essentially their ability to emulate.

The ZPD represents a critical phase in development known as the sensitive period. This phase signifies the most responsive time in an individual's life to particular influences. During other periods, the same influences might lack impact or even contrarily affect developmental trajectories.

Sensitive periods do not inherently correspond to biological age but rather hinge on the collaborative interaction between a child and an adult, particularly within the context of learning. Certain conditions, notably specific types of training, exclusively impact development during these sensitive periods when corresponding developmental cycles remain incomplete. Once these cycles reach fruition, the same conditions may no longer wield influence. The incomplete nature of developmental processes serves as a prerequisite for a period to be receptive to specific conditions.

The theoretical underpinning of the "learning experiment" method is rooted in the two developmental levels—actual and ZPD. This approach isn't an isolated technique but a specialized principle governing experimental design adaptable to various methods.

In the assessment of a child's mental development, determining whether the child can or cannot solve a given problem independently, typical for their age, does not singularly constitute a reliable assessment criterion. The true benchmark for evaluating a child's mental development lies in discerning their ZPD—establishing whether the child, with the guidance of an experimenter and having acquired suggested techniques during the learning process, can independently solve a similar problem if needed.

Utilizing a diagnostic "educational experiment" aims not to evaluate the child's current mental developmental stage but to assess their potential capacity to grasp new mental action methods (ZPD). Accordingly, tasks tailored for the same age group enable collaborative completion with adults. The degree of assistance required to accomplish the task becomes the principal criterion for evaluating the child's mental development.

To ensure precise and comparable data regarding the mental activities of diverse children post-experiment, it's imperative that assistance provided be quantitatively measured. This necessitates a regulated dosing of aid, a requirement pivotal for accurate assessment and consistency across subjects. This parameter, encompassing varied types of assistance, must be explicitly outlined within the experimental instructions.

The structured intervention system within the educational experiment adheres to a meticulous regulation and sequence of aid provision. The process commences with minimal, concise guidance termed "lesson tips," gradually advancing toward more comprehensive and detailed assistance.

Included within student case assignments are tasks prompting an in-depth understanding of aid mechanisms for children with disabilities. This involves practical

illustration and examples showcasing the utilization of different assistance forms:

1. Simple repetition to regain a child's focus.
2. Affirmation and encouragement for further actions (e.g., "good," "carry on").
3. Seeking clarification through questions regarding the child's actions.
4. Offering leading questions or critical objections.
5. Providing hints or advising on specific actions.
6. Demonstrating an action and prompting the child to replicate it.
7. Extended coaching sessions to guide the child in task completion.

Criteria for evaluating a child's mental development encompass their responsiveness to aid, capacity for logical extrapolation, and orientation during the establishment of novel mental concepts.

In seminar sessions, students delve into the concept of the "learning experiment." This principle, adaptable to various experimental methodologies, entails a three-stage process: an indicative phase, a principal task, and a similar task. The principal task is meticulously selected to pose a precise challenge within the "difficulty zone" for children of the same age group. The experimenter's aid is methodically administered in terms of quality, sequenced as "lesson tips," contingent on the child's progress in tackling the task. The frequency of these lessons adjusts according to the child's proficiency in task completion.

Variations in methodologies are tailored to suit different types of training experiments, such as the classification of figures or Koos cubes. Among these, the classification of geometric shapes stands as the most prevalent. This method, when modified, serves as a valuable tool for examining the potential capacities of children aged 7-10, positioning itself within the "difficulty zone" even for typically developing children of this age group. Remarkably, completion of this task doesn't necessitate prior school-based knowledge.

For children aged over 10, the "Klipets" technique can be employed, following the teaching experiment paradigm. This approach is designed to unveil abstract reasoning abilities in individuals, encompassing both children and adults with limited educational backgrounds.

Consequently, mastering assessment methodologies and techniques to explore the zone of proximal development serves as a foundational preparation for educators in secondary educational settings, equipping them to adeptly engage with children having disabilities.

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