
CONFERENCE ARTICLE**Use Of Innovative Methodological Approaches In The Methodology Of Developing Associative Thinking In Young Learners****Z. N. Ortiqova**

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Abstract: This article highlights the significance of innovative methodological approaches in developing associative thinking among young learners. Within the framework of the study, the methodological potential of the cluster method, associative chains, problem-based tasks, interactive methods, and digital resources in developing associative thinking is analyzed. The study reveals the close relationship between these methods and cognitive, integrative, activity-based, communicative, learner-centered, and competency-based approaches. It also substantiates the potential of these methods for developing learners' abilities to identify relationships between concepts, group ideas, understand cause-and-effect relationships, find independent and non-standard solutions, express their ideas orally, and develop reflective skills.

Keywords: Associative thinking, innovative methodological approaches, young learners, primary education, cluster method, associative chain, problem-based tasks, interactive methods, digital resources, cognitive approach, integrative approach, activity-based approach, communicative approach, competency-based approach, creative thinking.

Introduction

Innovative methodological approaches constitute the theoretical foundation of the methodology for developing associative thinking among young learners, because any method, technology, or didactic tool acquires pedagogical purposefulness, consistency, and effectiveness only when it is based on a specific methodological framework. From this perspective, it is appropriate to identify which approaches underlie the application of methods and technologies aimed at developing associative thinking, which aspects of learners' thinking they activate, and what functions they perform within the subsequent methodological system.

The cluster method is based on cognitive and integrative approaches, as it enables learners to collect words, images, phenomena, and ideas associated with a particular concept, group them, and organize them according to meaningful relationships. For example, gathering associations such as "flower," "rain," "sun," "Navruz," "birds," and "greenery" around the concept of "spring" expands the learner's semantic field and helps them recognize interdisciplinary and real-life connections.

The associative chain is aligned with activity-based and communicative approaches because, through this method, learners move mentally from one concept to another and then to a subsequent image or phenomenon. For example, a chain such as "book – knowledge – school – teacher – lesson – question – answer" activates existing units in the learner's memory, increases the speed of thinking, and encourages the verbal expression of relationships between concepts. The associative chain is particularly suitable for young learners because it can be organized in the form of games, competitions, group activities, and creative exercises. In Chapter 3, this method should be substantiated as a means of developing the speed, consistency, flexibility, and verbal expression of associative thinking.

Problem-based tasks correspond to the content of competency-based and activity-based approaches. A problem situation encourages learners not to recall a ready-made answer, but to search for a new solution based on their existing knowledge, life

experience, and associative connections. For example, tasks such as "What changes would occur in nature if there were no trees?", "How would the story continue if the character had made a different decision?", and "What other purposes could the given object be used for?" activate learners' causal, functional, and creative associations. In this regard, problem-based tasks should be presented in Chapter 3 as a means of connecting associative thinking with real learning situations and developing learners' abilities to find independent solutions and think unconventionally.

Interactive methods are based on learner-centered, activity-based, and reflective approaches. Methods such as group work, pair discussions, "brainstorming," "idea wheel," question-and-answer activities, role-playing, and discussion expand learners' opportunities to freely express their associations, compare them with the ideas of others, establish new connections, and justify their responses. In such methods, the learner is not a passive listener but an active subject who expresses ideas, asks questions, provides explanations, and defends their viewpoints. Therefore, interactive methods strengthen the communicative, verbal, and reflective aspects of associative thinking.

Digital resources are applied in conjunction with cognitive, integrative, and competency-based approaches. Multimedia presentations, electronic tasks, interactive applications, virtual cards, digital tests, animated materials, and online platforms expand learners' opportunities to establish associative connections among different forms of information, including text, images, sound, movement, and symbols. However, digital tools are methodologically effective not merely when they enhance visual presentation, but when they serve to activate learners' cognitive activity and enable them to connect, select, group, explain, and evaluate concepts.

In conclusion, the development of associative thinking has always remained a relevant issue in the theory of education and upbringing. Through this form of thinking, individuals enrich their experience and gain a deeper understanding of reality by establishing connections among diverse knowledge and ideas.

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