INCREASING STUDENTS' COGNITIVE ACTIVITY IN NATIVE LANGUAGE AND LITERACY LESSONS

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Annotation: *This thesis explores effective methods of enhancing cognitive activity among primary school students during native language and literacy lessons. It emphasizes how activities such as text analysis, problem-based tasks, and creative exercises contribute to developing students' independent thinking, understanding, reasoning, and analytical skills. Lessons organized with a cognitive approach activate students' intellectual abilities and help shape them as active participants in the learning process.*

Keywords: *cognitive activity, native language, literacy, primary education, thinking, analytical tasks, text work, problem situations, interactive methods, creative thinking*

In today's education system, the primary goal of primary education is not only to deliver knowledge, but also to develop students' cognitive skills such as independent thinking, analysis, and consistent reasoning. In this process, native language and literacy lessons serve as the main tools. Through these subjects, students develop not only literacy skills but also critical competencies such as thinking, communication, comprehension, and expression.

Enhancing students' cognitive activity means stimulating their curiosity, encouraging them to explore and analyze, and providing opportunities for them to express and justify their thoughts. By introducing a cognitive approach to teaching, lessons become more dynamic, students become active participants, and the quality of education increases significantly. Therefore, native language and literacy lessons should be organized in a way that every task, question, and problem activates the student's thinking process and directs them toward conscious and independent learning.

Native language and literacy classes are considered the foundation of primary education. These subjects not only develop literacy and speech skills but also foster cognitive skills such as comprehension, analysis, and critical thinking.

Cognitive activity refers to the harmonious development of a student's abilities to perceive, comprehend, remember, and apply knowledge in practice. Today, the focus of education is not merely delivering information, but activating students' thinking and encouraging them to think independently.

Especially in native language and reading classes, students' cognitive activity can be increased through working with texts, question-and-answer activities, analytical tasks, discussion, and problem-solving strategies. For instance, asking questions like "Why do you

think this happened?" or "What would have happened if…?" helps students understand cause-and-effect relationships and learn to reason.

Additionally, tasks such as creating diagrams based on a text, analyzing characters, or imagining alternative endings expand students' thinking skills. In cognitively oriented lessons, students are not passive listeners but active participants with their own opinions, analyses, and viewpoints. The teacher's important role here is to design questions and tasks that take into account the students' age and individual characteristics and to effectively use interactive methods, visual, and didactic materials.

Increasing cognitive activity fosters students' speech culture, independent thinking, and ability to make decisions in complex situations. Thus, organizing literacy lessons based on cognitive approaches creates a foundation for shaping students not only as literate individuals but as thoughtful, reflective, and conscious personalities.

Methods to Increase Students' Cognitive Activity

In primary grades, native language and literacy lessons not only teach reading and writing but also develop students' cognitive abilities such as thinking, comprehension, analysis, comparison, generalization, and reasoning. These abilities are referred to as cognitive activity. To enhance it, teachers must effectively apply various methods, approaches, and assignments. Below is a detailed description of these methods:

1. Problem-Based Learning

One of the most effective methods for stimulating thinking is creating a problem situation. In this method, the teacher doesn't provide ready-made knowledge but encourages students to seek solutions independently.

Examples:

Before finishing the text, ask: "How do you think the story will end?"

Ask hypothetical questions like: "If you were in the main character's place, what would you do?"

This leads students to analyze the flow of events, understand cause-effect relations, and think critically and creatively.

2. Questioning and Analysis Methods

While working with a text, asking questions increases students' attention and comprehension. Question types may include:

Reproductive (recalling content),

Interpretive (analyzing content),

Cognitive (evaluating, reasoning, making new conclusions).

Examples:

"Why did the character act that way?"

"What lesson did you learn?"

"How would you solve this situation?"

These methods develop students' speech, logical reasoning, and oral and written expression skills.

3. Use of Clusters and Graphic Organizers

Visual methods are very effective for classifying, organizing, and analyzing information. For example:

Cluster – write a central idea and surround it with related thoughts.

T-Chart – a two-column chart to compare similarities and differences.

Concept Map – shows the relationship between main and supporting ideas in a text. These help students develop structured thinking, analysis, and understanding of abstract concepts.

4. "Think and Reason" Strategy

This method allows students to express deep analytical thoughts based on a given text. Examples:

"Could this event happen today?"

"Compare the characters' behavior."

"Write a new ending for the story."

It enables students to justify their thoughts logically, consider other viewpoints, and find different approaches to the same question.

5. Role-Play and Dramatization

Based on a text, students take on roles of characters and perform scenes, which enhances their communication, thinking, and expression skills.

Examples:

Reenact fairy tales,

Act out scenes from the story.

This deepens their understanding, encourages analysis, and develops empathy.

6. Creative Tasks

Among the best ways to promote cognitive activity are creative writing and open-ended thinking exercises:

Examples:

"Choose a new title for the text."

"Rewrite the story from another character's perspective."

"Write a personal essay: If I were in this situation…"

"Recall and compare a similar story or tale."

This encourages independent thinking, creativity, and reasoning.

. Use of ICT and Digital Tools

Modern technologies engage students through interactive quizzes and tests.

Examples:

Games and quizzes via Kahoot, Quizizz, Wordwall

QR-coded questions that link to tasks

Padlet, Jamboard for group discussions

These tools motivate students to learn, increase interest, and foster active participation.

8. Metacognitive Approaches

These methods help students become aware of their learning processes. Examples:

"What did you learn today?"

"What was unclear?"

"How did you reach this conclusion?"

As a result, students monitor, assess, and improve their own learning skills.

Conclusion

Enhancing cognitive activity in native language and literacy lessons is one of the essential components of modern education. Developing students' ability to think independently, analyze, reason, and approach problems creatively leads to deeper knowledge acquisition. Interactive methods, problem-based tasks, discussions, and practical assignments prove to be effective in this regard.

Moreover, the use of modern information technologies and personalized teaching based on students' interests play an important role in boosting cognitive activity. Well-structured and meaningful literacy lessons increase students' engagement and interest in the subject. Hence, ongoing research and methodological efforts in this area are vital for improving the quality and effectiveness of education.

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