

THE DEVELOPMENT OF VISUAL THINKING SKILLS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract:

Developing visual thinking abilities is essential for enhancing language learning results, particularly for middle school students. This article looks at how visual thinking techniques, like using pictures, diagrams, and art projects, can enhance vocabulary development, comprehension, and involvement in the foreign language learning process. The theoretical underpinnings of visual thinking, real-world application techniques, and empirical proof of its efficacy comprise the article's three primary components. Teachers can establish a more dynamic and productive learning environment by incorporating visual thinking into the language learning process.

Key words: visual thinking, language acquisition, foreign language instruction, middle school students, visual aids.

1. The theoretical basis of visual thinking

The technique of organizing, interpreting, and communicating knowledge through visual representations is known as visual thinking. Its foundation is the brain's innate capacity to digest visual information more quickly than text, which makes it an effective teaching tool. Visual thinking enhances memorization and comprehension when teaching foreign languages by assisting students in making the connection between words and images. Since pupils learn words more effectively when they associate them with images or diagrams, research indicates that visual memory and vocabulary development are tightly related. Additionally, visual thinking fosters creativity and critical thinking, which helps pupils better communicate abstract concepts.

Why is visual thinking important for middle school students?

1. Age characteristics: Middle school students are at the stage of active development of cognitive and creative abilities. Visual thinking helps them to better assimilate abstract concepts that are often found in foreign languages (for example, verb tenses or idioms).
2. Motivation: Teenagers often lose interest in traditional teaching methods. Visual tools such as comics, infographics, or videos make lessons more fun.
3. Preparing for the future: Visual thinking develops skills that will be useful in further studies and work, for example, data analysis, presentation of ideas and problem solving.

Using technology:

- Visualization Applications: Programs like Canva, MindMeister, or Padlet help you create visual projects.
- Interactive whiteboards: The use of interactive whiteboards (such as the SMART Board) makes lessons more dynamic and engaging.
- Online platforms: Platforms such as Kahoot or Quizlet offer visual tasks and language learning games.

[1]

There is a wide variety of visualization methods in the classroom using technical equipment: videos, movie clips, presentations, hint matrices, speech stamps, simulators, mental maps, tag clouds, infographics, etc.

Let's take a closer look at some of them:

Multimedia presentations

Multimedia presentations are "educational materials prepared with the help of the multimedia presentation editor Power Point. M. P. is used to organize work on a specific topic, to attract students' attention to lexico-grammatical or regional studies material" [2]. Students are more engaged and motivated to study English when multimedia presentations are used. The teacher can direct the students' attention to the actual learning process by presenting the content in this way. Additionally, the range of media available for use in a

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presentation aids in selecting the best way to demonstrate the lesson materials, enhancing the textbook's illustrative content. The teacher has the right to make presentations himself or use ready-made methodological recommendations from teachers' web resources.

Mental maps

Mental maps (which are also referred to as "connection diagrams", "associative maps", "mental maps", "memory maps", "mental maps" as well as "intelligence maps") constitute "a method for graphically expressing the processes of perception, processing and memorizing information, solving creative problems, as well as a tool for developing memory and thinking, thanks to which it is possible to use both hemispheres to form the educational and cognitive competence of students" [3]. Link diagrams aid in organizing the course content in an understandable manner and operate on the basis of keyword memorization, departing from the main idea. The use of such maps in English lessons in middle and high school makes it possible to create motivation to actively participate in the learning process and master English as a means of communication, and also allows you to design the content of the lesson's teaching material, teach students to use dictionaries in order to find the necessary meanings. Using a computer and an interactive whiteboard, the teacher can show students the logic of creating a mental map and, accordingly, the logic of constructing the lesson material or topic.

Including posters of movies and performances, concert and exhibition announcements, interesting remarks and discussions, and other games, puzzles, and crosswords into the classroom has shown to be an effective way to reduce stress and diffuse the situation. But it's important to keep in mind that all of this—especially pre-made materials that aren't meant for students to work independently for extended periods of time—must be used carefully, or else the initial excitement may quickly fade and be replaced by weariness and apathy. Most modern textbooks use visual reinforcement to help students learn vocabulary and grammatical concepts. This is done to improve student motivation. Popular foreign language textbooks are well designed, equipped not only with illustrations and color tables, but also with caricatures, pictographs, collages, graphs, diagrams, diagrams, "clouds" typical of comics, etc. [5]

According to Gilbert Weber and Elroy Bollinger (1949), visual aids are "any specially prepared drawings, illustrations, models, films, slides, or other means that accelerate learning through visual perception." They enhance the educational process, aid instructors and learners in comprehending the subject matter more fully, increase vocabulary, and give language acquisition greater purpose. Knowledge of the material and the capacity to present it in an engaging manner are key components of pedagogical competency. One of the fundamental tenets of didactics is the principle of clarity, which states that learning is predicated on particular images that students directly perceive in addition to a carefully planned presentation of linguistic and non-linguistic content to aid in its comprehension, assimilation, and application in speech activities. [6]

The integration of visual aids into the learning process through multimedia attracts the attention of students, facilitates the understanding of grammar and vocabulary, increases motivation and promotes the memorization of new words and structures. In addition to speeding up the language learning process, visual tools create a more meaningful learning context.

Conclusion

Students become more engaged and active members of the study group as a result of all these elements. Both artificial and natural things utilized in the teaching process are considered visual learning resources. They act as fundamental aides for both teachers and students and carry educational material. People arrange their perception of events and develop an action plan in daily life by using mental models, maps, diagrams, and structures. These models form a significant part of the structure of the subconscious mind, on which conscious thinking and decision-making are based.

In daily life, people arrange their perception of events and decide on a course of action for future activities that will help them reach their objectives by using mental constructs, models, maps, and diagrams of how the world functions. These models make up a sizable portion of the unconscious structure, which serves as the foundation for our conscious thought and decision-making processes. Numerous structural and logical schemes allows the teacher to give the material in different ways and the student to memorize the absorption of learned information in the most convenient way. In summary, the most efficient method of conveying, absorbing, and subsequently applying acquired knowledge is through visual representation. With the help of visualization tools, special methods of managing educational activities can be used, which affects the activity of students and their self-regulation in learning. With methodically competent use of visualization methods, students can move to higher levels of cognitive activity and master the subject content with elements of creativity.

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