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Teaching Literary Texts Based on Problem-Based Learning Technology (On The Example of The Story “The Content and The Greedy”)

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Abstract: This study investigates the effectiveness of problem-based learning technology in teaching literary texts to 5th grade students in general secondary education. Using the story “The Content and the Greedy” as a case study, the research examines how problem-based instructional strategies influence students’ independent thinking, analytical skills, and critical engagement with literary content. A quasi-experimental design was employed, involving experimental and control groups. The findings indicate that students exposed to problem-based learning demonstrated significantly higher levels of comprehension, interpretation, and evaluative thinking compared to those taught through traditional methods. The study confirms that integrating problem-based learning into literature instruction enhances students’ cognitive engagement and supports deeper textual analysis. The results suggest that this approach is an effective pedagogical strategy for developing higher-order thinking skills in early secondary education.

Keywords: Problem-Based Learning, Literature Teaching, Literary Text Analysis, Critical Thinking, Analytical Thinking, 5th Grade Education, Pedagogical Innovation, Active Learning, Educational Technology

1. Introduction

In the modern education system, the development of students’ independent thinking, analytical, and critical thinking skills is considered one of the priority tasks. In particular, it is important to form the skills of conscious reading, comprehension, and personal interpretation of literary texts among 5th grade students of general secondary schools. This is because it is precisely at this stage that students begin to develop reading interest, cognitive activity, and literary thinking [1, 2].

Practical observations show that 5th grade students often perceive literary works superficially, limiting themselves to retelling the sequence of events, while deep analytical understanding of the text’s inner meaning, idea, and characters’ behavior is not sufficiently developed [3, 4]. This, in turn, reduces the effectiveness of literary education. One of the modern pedagogical approaches to solving this problem is the use of problem-based learning technology. One of the reasons for the advancement of the American education system is that, since the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it began with teaching children how to search for solutions to problems. [5, 6] Problem-based learning activates students, encourages inquiry, and develops skills such as asking questions, understanding problems, and independently finding solutions. Especially in teaching literary texts,

creating problem situations activates students' thinking processes and enables deeper understanding of the text. In this regard, this article analyzes the teaching of the story "The Content and the Greedy" to 5th grade students based on problem-based learning technology. [7] This story, with its simple plot, life-like content, and moral-educational value, serves as suitable material for creating problem situations and encouraging students' critical thinking.

Problem-based learning emerged in the early 20th century and is associated with the American psychologist and educator J. Dewey. The implementation of this technology into practice is largely connected with the Canadian scholar S. Barrows. The theoretical foundations of problem-based learning have been studied by many scholars, including V. Okon, M. Makhmutov, V. Kudryavtsev, V. Maransman, N. Mochalova, A. Matyushkin, I. Ilnitskaya, as well as Uzbek scholars A. Abdurazzoqov, Q. Husanboyeva, and others. They substantiated that the internal need for intellectual activity in learners arises in problem situations and from interest in understanding complex issues placed before them. [8]

In modern pedagogy, problem-based learning technology is recognized as an effective means of activating cognitive activity, encouraging independent thinking, and developing decision-making skills in problem situations. According to this approach, the learner is not a passive recipient of ready-made knowledge but an active subject who identifies, analyzes, and independently solves problems. Research shows that problem situations activate cognitive processes and create an internal need for learning, thereby increasing educational effectiveness [9, 10].

In literary education, teaching literary texts requires a specific approach because a literary work is not only an information source but also a complex system with aesthetic and educational significance. Therefore, ensuring student activity and guiding them toward independent interpretation of the text is essential.

Research indicates that interactive methods, question-and-answer techniques, discussions, and problem-based situations are effective in analyzing literary texts.

The main objectives of problem-based learning are as follows:

1. Developing students' independent and creative learning activity.
2. Ensuring acquisition of new knowledge and methods of activity.
3. Enhancing students' independence and creativity in learning.
4. Increasing the scientific level of education.
5. Forming a scientific worldview in learners.
6. Developing emotional-volitional qualities and awakening internal motivation for understanding the world. [11]

Since 5th grade students are still developing analytical thinking skills, special methodological approaches are needed to guide them toward deep understanding of literary texts. Problem-based learning technology is effective in developing skills such as questioning, hypothesizing, identifying cause-effect relationships, and drawing independent conclusions. The implementation of problem-based learning includes the following stages [12]:

1. Creating a problem situation;
2. Asking questions;
3. Formulating hypotheses;
4. Research and discussion;
5. Finding and justifying solutions;
6. Drawing conclusions.

2. Materials and Methods

This study was conducted among 5th grade students of a general secondary school. A pedagogical experiment was carried out to determine the effectiveness of problem-based learning in teaching literary texts. A total of 49 students participated, divided into an experimental group (26 students) and a control group (23 students). In the experimental group, lessons were conducted using problem-based learning technology, while in the control group, traditional teaching methods were used. The story "The Content and the Greedy" from the 5th grade literature textbook was selected as the main research material. During the lesson, the problem question "Which path is correct: searching for treasure or being content?" was presented to students. Based on the story, students analyzed two characters – the content and the greedy friend. Working in groups, they examined the characters' actions, decision-making processes, and consequences. This process developed students' independent thinking, comparison, and conclusion-making skills. At the end of the lesson, students concluded that contentment is a positive trait while greed is negative, summarizing that "Contentment brings happiness, while greed leads to suffering."

In the control group, the story was taught using traditional methods such as teacher explanation, question-answer, and retelling. This allowed for a comparative analysis of the two approaches.

The following methods were used: pedagogical observation, questionnaires, tests, and comparative analysis of results. Students' ability to understand, analyze, and express independent opinions was assessed at the beginning and end of the experiment.

3. Results

Table 1. Dynamics of students' knowledge levels (%)

Level	Experimental group (start)	Experimental group (end)	Control group (start)	Control group (end)
High	20%	48%	18%	26%
Medium	44%	40%	46%	50%
Low	36%	12%	36%	24%

The table 1 shows a significant improvement in the experimental group. The proportion of high-level students increased from 20% to 48%, while low-level students decreased from 36% to 12%. In the control group, changes were less significant. These results confirm the effectiveness of problem-based learning technology [13].

4. Discussion

The findings of this study show that problem-based learning contributes to improving students' ability to interpret literary texts more deeply and independently. This indicates that when learners are engaged in problem situations, their cognitive activity becomes more active and focused on meaning-making rather than simple reproduction of content [14]. From a pedagogical point of view, this approach shifts literature teaching from memorization-based learning to analytical and interpretative learning. As a result, students develop not only comprehension skills but also the ability to evaluate characters' actions and derive moral judgments from the text. The effectiveness of this method can be explained by its ability to stimulate learners' thinking through cognitive challenge and inquiry. In literary education, such engagement is particularly important, as it helps students connect textual content with real-life values and ethical understanding [15].

Overall, the results confirm that problem-based learning is an effective instructional approach for developing independent thinking and deeper textual understanding in early secondary education.

5. Conclusion

The study demonstrated that the use of problem-based learning technology significantly improves 5th grade students' comprehension, analytical thinking, and independent interpretation skills in literary texts. Lessons based on the story "The Content and the Greedy" increased student engagement and deepened understanding of the text.

Recommendations

- a. It is advisable to widely apply problem-based learning technology in teaching literary texts in 5th grade literature classes.
- b. Teachers should guide students toward independent thinking through problem-based questions rather than providing ready-made answers.
- c. Methods such as discussion, group work, and role-playing are recommended when teaching morally oriented stories.
- d. Special methodological guides should be developed for teachers on applying problem-based learning technology.
- e. Further research should expand this approach to other grades and literary works.

Overall, problem-based learning has been proven to be an important pedagogical tool not only for knowledge acquisition but also for developing analytical and critical thinking skills in students.

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