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STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING ENGLISH TO PRESCHOOLERS IN AN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

Foreign researchers in age psychology believe that mastering a foreign language is easier for a child than for an adult. Methodologists advise starting learning foreign languages with English, as it is simpler in its structure and more often used in everyday life. At the preschool age, children's long-term memory is particularly well-developed, which plays a crucial role in their language acquisition. New words learned in short-term memory can more easily move to long-term memory during this stage of cognitive development. As a result of consistent exposure and usage, these words are likely to become a regular and integral part of the child's active vocabulary in a relatively short period of time, enabling better communication and understanding. The child's ability to grasp and use these terms effectively will enhance their linguistic skills and confidence in various situations. This vocabulary expansion will enhance their cognitive development and understanding as they interact more with their environment and others. Ultimately, fostering this growth in vocabulary lays a strong foundation for future learning and expression. This period of rapid language growth is essential for building a solid foundation for future communication skills. Preschool children learn new information quickly if it is presented in an age-appropriate manner. Learning a foreign language at an early age contributes to the development of phonemic hearing, communicative skills and carries intellectual and moral potential [1, 2].

On average, the optimal age for learning a foreign language is from 3 to 10 years old, because at this age children already have a sufficient vocabulary of their native language, as well as already

formed speech skills [2]. A child at six months begins to distinguish errors in intonation, to master phonetics and emotional coloring of the language. It is recommended to conduct foreign language classes with a child under 3 years of age individually with a native speaker. Children at the age of 3–4 years have no language barrier, respectively; it is easier for them to communicate in a foreign language, including with a native speaker, and not only with a teacher. At the age of 2.5 to 4 years it is recommended to practice in mini-groups in a game form, as at this age the game is the leading type of activity. For example, you can practice and repeatedly repeat simple speech patterns, learn poems, sing songs, watch educational cartoons, and play role-playing games. The process of play activates speech and thinking activity and creates communicative situations, as well as forms a positive motivation to learn a foreign language, as well as causes positive emotions and builds team spirit. Preschool children have a better developed language memory, which favorably contributes to the creation of a “lexical portfolio” of the child, classes are better conducted by a foreign language teacher to build an educational trajectory and the formation of skills “mastery” of a foreign language. At the age of 4.5 to 7 years it is possible to combine individual and group classes, both with a native speaker and with a foreign language teacher. When organizing foreign language classes for preschoolers, it is important to take into account the duration of concentration of children’s attention to calculate the duration of classes. Information received after the period of the main concentration of the child’s attention may not be assimilated, which will make the lesson ineffective. In children of 3 years of age, the concentration of attention is up to 15 minutes; in children of 4 years of age – up to 20 minutes. Children 5 years of age have an attention span of 10 to 20 minutes, and children 6 years of age have an attention span of up to 30 minutes. It is important to take into account the activity of the child, as the concentration of attention in active children can be reduced by 2 times. Accordingly, the duration of the lesson with preschoolers should be 25 minutes on average [3].

Based on the analysis of methodological literature and our own practice, we can offer recommendations on the organization of foreign language classes for preschoolers in the online format. An online lesson

should not differ from face-to-face classes in terms of content. On the online lesson should be applied all the methods and forms of teaching, as well as on a standard lesson. This requirement must be met, because the effectiveness of face-to-face teaching has already been proven, so if the same techniques are repeated in the online format, we can say that such a lesson is effective. However, teaching English to preschoolers in an online setting presents unique challenges and requires a thoughtful adaptation of instructional methods and approaches. It is important to consider the specific developmental and learning needs of children at this age, as well as their shorter attention spans and need for interactive engagement. This adaptation must effectively leverage the virtual environment to maintain their interest and promote active participation throughout the learning process. Therefore, educators must be particularly innovative and resourceful to create a stimulating and effective online learning experience for young children. Here are the key aspects to consider:

In online learning it is crucial to use bright and attractive visual materials such as pictures, videos and animations. Interactive games and applications that incorporate graphics and sound will help keep children's attention. Use of interactive whiteboards. If it is not possible to conduct lessons on platforms with built-in interactive whiteboards, online whiteboards can be used. Examples of online whiteboards include AMW boards, MIRO, and Whiteboard Fox. Singing songs and watching animated movies. Often short songs are part of the curriculum of English courses for preschoolers. Their texts are focused on learning and practicing the necessary vocabulary and grammar, and the interesting sound helps to memorize what they hear more easily. As a rule, each song is dedicated to a different topic: alphabet, animals, clothes, colors, numbers, etc. Advantages of educational songs: repeated repetition of simple words helps to quickly replenish the vocabulary, the child learns to perceive a foreign language by ear, while singing, the child repeats not only the words, but also intonation and accent – so he forms the correct pronunciation. Educational cartoons for young children – it has an interesting plot, simple vocabulary and slow pace for comfortable assimilation of new information. Advantages of educational cartoons in English

for preschoolers: dialogues contain basic vocabulary: popular words and phrases for everyday use, a large number of repetitions of words and phrases throughout the different episodes help to remember universal constructions and consolidate the learned material, short videos are good to hold the interest of the child and do not let him get distracted. English cartoons and educational videos in English for preschoolers are available on various streaming platforms, including YouTube.

2. Short-term and dynamic activities: Given the short attention span of preschoolers, lessons should be short (10–15 minutes) and dynamic. Dividing the lesson into several smaller activities helps keep interest and motivation.

3. Virtual play environments: Leveraging online platforms that integrate playful features can significantly enhance user engagement. For example, interactive games, quizzes, and quests can make learning fun and stimulating. At preschool age, it is essential to present new information through play, so it is better remembered and generates interest in further foreign language learning. There are many educational and interactive online games that can replace the standard games used in face-to-face learning. There are phonetic, grammar and lexical games. Today, you can find many interactive platforms or applications.

4. Technological support: It is important to make sure that children have access to a stable internet connection and the necessary equipment (computer, tablet, headphones with microphone). Technical issues can be distracting and interfere with learning. In the context of conducting online learning activities, it is essential for the student to activate the screen demonstration feature.

5. Synchronous and asynchronous learning methods can be highly effective when they are thoughtfully combined. Integrating live online classes for real-time discussions with instructors, along with asynchronous assignments like watching educational videos and completing tasks, offers a balanced learning approach. This combination allows for flexibility in learning while still facilitating immediate feedback and collaborative learning experiences. Ultimately, this blend caters to diverse learning styles and helps reinforce the material

covered during live sessions. This allows children to learn at their own pace and repeat material as needed.

6. Enhance the role of audiovisuals: Virtual lessons should place a greater focus on audiovisual elements. Incorporating songs, rhymes, sound effects, and varied speech patterns significantly enhances children's understanding and retention of the material. By making lessons more engaging and interactive, children can connect emotionally with the content. This approach not only captivates their attention but also fosters a deeper appreciation for the subject.

7. Engagement and feedback are crucial components of effective education. Maintaining consistent interaction between educators and students fosters an environment where learning thrives. Regular feedback and the reinforcement of positive behavior significantly enhance the educational experience.

8. A personalized approach is crucial in education, especially considering the wide range of children's unique personalities, learning styles, and individual needs. By tailoring assignments and resources to fit each child's interests and abilities, educators can ensure that every student remains engaged and motivated in their learning journey. This customization not only helps to keep their curiosity alive but also effectively supports their development at an appropriate pace. Ultimately, such an individualized strategy fosters a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

Utilizing these innovative teaching methods not only elicits bright and joyful emotions in preschoolers but also facilitates their ability to grasp new concepts and material more readily. By implementing these recommendations in online foreign language classes tailored for young children, educators can significantly enhance the overall effectiveness of the sessions while fostering a well-rounded and inviting learning environment. This approach not only encourages a positive mindset towards learning a new language among preschoolers but also cultivates a sense of comfort and excitement in the process. Ultimately, the integration of these strategies will lead to more dynamic and engaging online learning experiences, greatly aiding in the successful acquisition of the English language by young learners.

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