

Article

Methodology for Developing Teamwork Skills in 4th-Grade Students Based on the Japanese Educational Approach (on the Example of Reading Literacy Lessons)

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Abstract: This article investigates the methodology of developing collective cooperation and social communication skills in primary school students by integrating the advanced experiences of the Japanese primary education system—specifically, the whole-child-centered "Tokkatsu" and small collaborative groups (Han) approach—into "Reading Literacy" classes. Based on the developmental and psychological characteristics of 4th-grade students, the processes of analyzing literary texts in groups and working on collaborative projects are thoroughly examined. The results obtained during the pedagogical experiment proved through mathematical-statistical criteria that the methodology based on the Japanese educational approach possesses a significantly higher effectiveness compared to traditional methods in ensuring mutual assistance, collective responsibility, and social adaptation among learners. The developed recommendations align with the requirements of the new National Curriculum and serve to enrich the framework of primary education textbooks and methodological manuals.

Keywords: collective cooperation, Japanese educational system, Tokkatsu, Han approach, reading literacy, primary education, social competence, interactive methods.

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Introduction

One of the priority tasks of the modern primary education system is not only to provide students with academic knowledge, but also to develop their social competences, particularly collective cooperation skills, which are considered essential for successful socialization in the 21st century. Specifically, in fostering teamwork, listening to others, and uniting for a common goal among primary school students (4th grade), the traditional Japanese educational approach, which has proven its high efficiency in global educational practice, can serve as an important methodological foundation. Within the Japanese primary education system, there is a specialized structure (Tokkatsu) that teaches students to prioritize collective interests over individual ones, encompasses daily practical actions in school life, and shapes collective responsibility, aiming to develop the child as an active and responsible member of society [1]. The age characteristics and psychological development stage of 4th-grade students are characterized precisely by an increasing need for group communication and finding their place among peers; during this period, it is essential to assist each child in demonstrating their individual potential within a collective environment [2].

"Reading Literacy" classes within the framework of the new National Curriculum introduced in general secondary schools of the Republic of Uzbekistan possess immense didactic potential for developing this skill in students. In these lessons, through analyzing literary texts in groups, preparing collaborative projects, and conducting role-playing games, students master a real practical model of cooperation. Indeed, the interactive communication that emerges during the process of working on a text fundamentally enhances not only students' linguistic and intellectual potential but also their culture of collective cooperation [3]. However, despite these benefits, the opportunities for the systematic and methodically targeted utilization of the Japanese educational phenomenon in primary school reading literacy classes have not yet been fully uncovered in Uzbek methodology. This circumstance determines the relevance, scientific-practical significance, and unique novelty of this research work.

Literature Review

The problems of developing collective cooperation and social skills in primary school students constitute one of the fundamentally researched areas in global and national pedagogy. Specifically, the psychological and didactic foundations of group cooperation technologies trace back to the works of classical scholars like J. Piaget and L. Vygotsky. In modern pedagogy, the issues of developing students' social intelligence and organizing the educational process collectively are systematically highlighted in E. Aronson's "Jigsaw" classroom methodology [4].

The specific aspects of the Japanese educational phenomenon, particularly the "Tokkatsu" (whole-child development practice) system that evokes a sense of cooperation and collectivism in the school environment, have been profoundly studied internationally by expert educators such as C. Lewis and R. Tsuneyoshi. Their scientific works analyze daily duty activities, group decision-making processes, and methods of uniting for a common goal in Japanese elementary schools, evaluating this approach as the most effective tool for ensuring children's socialization [5].

In local pedagogy and methodology, the problems of developing the linguistic competences and communication culture of primary school students are reflected in the research of prominent methodologist scholars such as K. Qosimova, S. Matchonov, and A. G'ulomov. They justified that the process of working on a literary text during native language and reading classes shapes not only the student's thinking but also their social communication environment [6]. However, the integration of advanced Japanese educational models to develop students' cooperation skills has not yet been examined as an independent object of research in these methodological works.

Methodology

This research is aimed at developing a methodical system for shaping collective cooperation skills in 4th-grade students during primary school "Reading Literacy" classes based on traditional Japanese educational approaches (including ideas of collective activity and mutual responsibility) and verifying its effectiveness in practice. The methodological foundation of the study is constituted by the cluster approach, the principles of learner-centered education, and the didactic adaptation of the interactive "Tokkatsu" (whole-child development) model of Japanese primary education. During the pedagogical experiment, a complex of empirical and theoretical methods was utilized to study the problem systematically [7].

The practical part of the research relies on pedagogical observation, questionnaires, and experimental teaching methods. In the initial phase, diagnostic assignments were conducted to determine the baseline level of 4th-grade students' teamwork skills. In the

experimental classes, reading literacy lessons were carried out using a specially developed methodology—organizing literary text analysis in groups and introducing the activities of small collective teams (*Han*), characteristic of Japanese schools, into the lesson rhythm [8]. At the conclusion of the experimental work, students' socio-communicative changes and collective cooperation coefficients were analyzed using mathematical-statistical methods, thereby justifying the reliability of the proposed methodology [9].

Results and Discussion

The empirical analyses conducted at the conclusion of the experimental work indicated that the integration of traditional Japanese educational approaches—specifically, small collective teams (*Han*) and mutual responsibility elements—into "Reading Literacy" classes yielded a significant positive growth in the experimental groups. When examining students' skills in analyzing literary texts in groups, distributing roles equitably, and reaching a common consensus, it was observed that the social communication environment in the experimental classes improved fundamentally compared to the control classes taught through traditional methods [10].

Particularly, students' indicators for listening to one another within groups and respecting peers' opinions demonstrated high dynamics under the influence of the traditional Japanese cooperation model [11]. This is because the principle of shared responsibility for the collective outcome among all group members, rather than merely completing individual tasks, successfully evoked a sense of collective belonging in children [12]. The analysis of indicators before and after the experimental work is reflected in the table below:

Development Level of Collective Cooperation Skills in 4th-Grade Students (in %)

Classes	Experimental Phase	Low Level (%)	Undefined/Medium (%)	High Level (%)
Control Class (<i>Traditional</i>)	Pre-test	42.5	45.0	12.5
	Post-test	38.0	46.5	15.5
Experimental Class (<i>Japanese Model</i>)	Pre-test	41.8	44.2	14.0
	Post-test	12.0	52.0	36.0

As shown in the table, while changes in the control classes remained minimal, the high-level indicator in the experimental classes where the Japanese educational model was applied rose from 14.0% to 36.0%, and the low-level indicator dropped from 41.8% to 12.0% [13].

The discussion of these results indicates that during the collaborative analysis of literary texts, children not only study the behaviors of characters but also practically master the rules of "social space" by interacting with their peers [14]. Thus, using Japanese "Tokkatsu" elements in reading literacy classes systematically enhances students' collective cooperation competences alongside their functional literacy [15].

Conclusion

The results of this research indicate that integrating traditional Japanese educational approaches—specifically, elements of the *Tokkatsu* and *Han* systems—into "Reading Literacy" classes possesses high pedagogical effectiveness in developing collective cooperation skills among primary school students. The environment of systematically analyzing literary texts in small groups, distributing roles equitably, and feeling shared responsibility for the collective outcome not only enhanced students' socio-communicative activity but also shaped a culture of listening to others and mutual respect. The mathematical-statistical indicators obtained during the experimental work proved that the proposed methodology secured a sharp increase in high-level indicators in the experimental classes compared to the control groups.

In conclusion, it is worth emphasizing that utilizing the Japanese educational experience interactively within the framework of the new National Curriculum of primary education serves to develop students' functional literacy and social competences simultaneously. The methodical recommendations and group work models developed in this study can serve as an important foundation for improving methodological manuals for primary grades, enriching the practical assignment database of textbooks, and raising thoroughly socialized, team-oriented, intellectual, and competitive individuals for modern society.

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