

Innovation and Practice in Preschool Education through Kindergarten Games Analysis

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Abstract: Early childhood education in kindergarten is based on the principles of respecting children's physical and mental development, with games often serving as the main approach. This article aims to address the current limitations of a single-mode game teaching and limited social resources in kindergarten education. It suggests that kindergartens and teachers should innovate and practice game-based teaching by following the principles of thematic, contemporary, and life-oriented games. This includes exploring innovative approaches to specific content, forms of implementation, and materials used in game-based teaching. The ultimate goal is to stimulate children's interest in learning, cultivate their core competencies, and enhance their overall abilities.

1. Introduction

In recent years, with the advancement and deepening of the new curriculum reform and the development of early childhood education, the government has put forward new hopes and requirements for the teaching methods and strategies in kindergartens. Kindergartens and teachers are expected to prioritize children's needs, integrate and develop corresponding educational resources, and facilitate children's grounded growth. Throughout the kindergarten stage, games are an integral part of children's experiences. Therefore, exploring innovation and practices in early childhood education through kindergarten games holds significant value. Teachers should timely update their teaching concepts and models, and leverage relevant teaching resources to conduct clear and engaging game activities.

2. The Current Situation of Game-Based Teaching in Kindergartens

In the latest "Guidelines for Learning and Development of 3-6-Year-Old Children" and "Guidelines for Kindergarten Education," it is proposed that teachers should not only provide children with knowledge assistance but also help them develop good behavioral and living habits, cultivate their independence, and lay a solid foundation for their future learning and life. This means that the preschool education stage is a crucial period for children's learning and growth, and teachers need to use game-based construction as a foundation and employ diverse methods to guide and assist children in cultivating their core literacy through subtle influence.

During this critical period, there are two factors that can influence children's habits: parents and schools/teachers. However, both sides have room for improvement based on the current situation of

preschool education.

First, let's start with parents. Many parents believe that preschool education should be relaxed and have a tolerant attitude towards children. This idea is actually incorrect. Many parents tend to fulfill every request of their children, leading to overindulgence. Even when teachers ask children to engage in independent activities, some parents may interfere to varying degrees and provide excessive support to their children. In this context, children who enter school may become arrogant and overly dependent, which can hinder their ability to think independently. During educational activities, when children face minor setbacks, they immediately seek the teacher's help and are unable to solve problems independently. This presents significant challenges for teachers' instruction. Since kindergarten activities mainly revolve around group games, parents' indulgence can make children feel like outsiders during game activities, hindering friendly communication and interaction with peers. At the same time, parents also fail to fulfill their responsibilities by not accompanying children in completing game tasks assigned by teachers during their free time, resulting in a lack of care for children and potentially leading to peculiar personalities.[1]

Secondly, the teaching model of game-based instruction by teachers is often monotonous, and the content can be dull. Some teachers' thinking is still stuck in traditional preschool education, where games are used solely to accomplish teaching tasks, disregarding children's actual abilities and developmental needs. In the process of game-based instruction, teachers often retain control over decision-making and suppress children's independence and initiative. Children who are new to educational environments should learn to adapt actively to campus life instead of passively assimilating. Moreover, children in this period have a strong ability to imitate and learn through observing and imitating others' words and actions. However, many teachers do not pay attention to their own behavior and language during instruction, failing to lead by example. Compared to the traditional and stagnant style of early childhood education classrooms in the past, the new curriculum reform requires teachers to focus on students and allow each child to unleash their potential and learn through individualized and diverse game-based teaching, subtly establishing correct learning concepts. If teachers can actively innovate game-based teaching strategies and methods, children will be able to achieve personalized development.[2]

3. The Significance of Game-Based Teaching in Kindergartens

The kindergarten stage is a crucial period for children's learning and growth. During this stage, children need to not only acquire theoretical knowledge but also develop good learning habits, laying a solid foundation for their future learning and life. In this process, teachers should respect the psychological and physiological characteristics of children at this stage and design corresponding teaching activities accordingly. Based on the early stage of children's cognitive development, most activities in preschool education are built around games. Therefore, teachers should optimize and improve game strategies, simplify classroom content through gamification, and make teaching content engaging and interesting to stimulate children's learning interests. Analyzing innovation and practices in preschool education through kindergarten games can have positive effects.

Firstly, it enhances children's enthusiasm for both games and learning. The uniqueness of innovative game activities can flexibly integrate extracurricular elements into the teaching process. Teachers can use this approach to select different teaching content and formats to capture children's attention and make game activities lively and dynamic. During this stage, children's curiosity, imagination, and creativity are at their peak, and diversified games can sustain and foster these qualities while helping them consciously cultivate their unique personalities and qualities. If early childhood teachers can flexibly combine teaching models with game activities, it will have a significant impact on promoting activities in preschool education. In this process, teachers should

consider multiple factors, focus on interacting and communicating with children, adhere to a learner-centered educational philosophy, and enrich teaching resources and methods based on children's interests. Active participation in games allows children to absorb more nutrients in the process of independent observation and learning, cultivating the skills they need and receiving positive information.

Secondly, it helps develop children's ability for self-directed learning. The early childhood stage is a foundation period for development, laying the groundwork for future learning. Therefore, it is necessary to cultivate children's abilities for self-directed learning and good learning habits during this stage. Teachers should try to avoid excessive admiration and dependence among children, which may have a negative impact on compulsory education later on. Most importantly, teachers should adapt to the current educational system reform, break through traditional educational models in advance, and firmly uphold the principle of putting children at the center. Innovation and practice in game activities specifically aim to cultivate children's ability for self-directed learning and ensure they have the correct learning concepts and a conducive growth environment. Additionally, children can find their own interests and expand their developmental paths through personalized games, achieving diversified growth. Therefore, early childhood teachers should focus on children's development, highly respect the diverse needs manifested in their growth, and ensure targeted interventions to maximize the benefits of game-based teaching.

4. Principles of Game-Based Teaching in Kindergartens

4.1. Thematic

During the kindergarten period, although children have some cognitive development, their understanding of abstract concepts is still at a basic stage. In previous game activities, due to children's liveliness, some teachers may use coercive measures to restrict children, aiming to promote the educational process. However, this can cause children to lose interest in learning and activities, leading to a certain level of resistance. In the rapidly evolving era of information technology, teachers should continuously improve their teaching methods, breaking through traditional teaching approaches. Teachers must understand that children are the main participants in game activities, so they need to design activities with clear themes to cultivate children's sense of ownership and lay the foundation for educational instruction. When facing children of different ages and stages, teachers should design game activities with different themes based on children's states, ensuring that children maintain their enthusiasm during the game process and fully integrate games and teaching activities.

4.2. Contemporary

In the field of education, the development of educational informatization is closely linked to information technology. The development of information technology can enrich teaching resources, optimize teaching methods, and innovate teaching models. With the advent of the big data era, children are exposed to diverse information at an increasingly early age. By incorporating modern multimedia into teaching, it can promote children's personalized development and better reflect the fundamental guiding role of early childhood education. Preschool education is the first encounter with systematic education in children's growth journey. The level of education and its effectiveness during this stage will have a decisive impact on children's growth. Therefore, teachers can only bring more possibilities to preschool education by integrating multimedia technology into game activities, allowing children to experience the development and changes in the broader social environment. This means that teachers need to continuously update their teaching methods to ensure that game content is contemporary, enabling the development of possibilities brought by information technology in

preschool education.

4.3. Life-oriented

In kindergarten classrooms, the goal is not only to help children understand the knowledge taught by teachers but, more importantly, to cultivate children's ability for independent thinking. Children in the kindergarten stage are at a lower level of thinking ability, and they need proper guidance to understand things and concepts. Therefore, teachers should integrate life-oriented elements into classroom teaching, helping children make their thinking concrete and guiding them to understand the benefits of developing good habits through game activities. Effective life-oriented contexts make abstract concepts more concrete, intuitive, and easier to understand, enabling children to find joy in games. At this stage, children are full of curiosity and creativity and are eager to discuss various phenomena and interesting experiences in life. Teachers can use this to stimulate children's interest in learning. To fully unleash children's subjective initiative, maximize their gains in games, and create a beneficial learning environment, teachers need to create a supportive atmosphere and environment based on children's needs.

5. Strategies for Game-Based Teaching in Kindergartens

5.1. Innovative Content

In traditional kindergarten game activities, teachers often focus on educational content within the school premises, detached from real-life experiences. However, the concept of early childhood education emphasizes the need for "education to be lifelike and life to be educational." This means that kindergartens must actively go beyond the "walls" and incorporate social educational resources into the actual teaching process. The kindergarten stage is the first time children receive systematic education, and schools and teachers should provide them with the latest social demands and moral requirements, guiding their educational instruction. The goal is not only for children to acquire theoretical knowledge in school but also to enter society, imitate and internalize positive qualities. With the emphasis on cultivating "comprehensive" talents in China's basic education, the kindergarten stage becomes a critical period for shaping children's correct concepts, developing comprehensive literacy, shaping sound personalities, and establishing lofty ideals. The development and utilization of social educational resources in kindergartens involve two elements: community resources and family resources. Schools and teachers need to integrate resources based on children's developmental stages, age characteristics, and collaborate with the community to innovate and practice game-based teaching content. Teachers must consciously optimize game content using social educational resources to enhance children's independent thinking abilities, cultivate good moral character, and develop appropriate emotional values and attitudes. Furthermore, the development and utilization of social educational resources can help children build self-confidence, stimulate their enthusiasm for learning and life, enhance their comprehensive literacy, shape their sound personalities, and foster their lofty ideals.

The interactive education model between schools and communities allows kindergarten game-based teaching to have more diverse content forms. Kindergartens should establish aligned goals with the community and conduct well-organized and lively game-based teaching in cooperation with relevant educational departments. Regular meetings and discussions should be held to address shortcomings in activity implementation, actively develop and explore potential educational resources in the community, and internalize them. For example, teachers can design a game activity with the theme of "fruit picking." Before going to the orchard, teachers can provide detailed information about the fruits to be picked, such as appearance, habits, and growth environment. In this

process, teachers can assess children's learning progress through questioning and lay a solid foundation for the picking activity. During the fruit-picking process, children can work in small teams, accompanied by teachers and community personnel, to complete tasks and compete to see who can make the best choices. Finally, teachers, the community, and children can reflect on and improve the game process to maximize the benefits of resource utilization. Only with such game-based teaching can we break the limitations of previous in-school activities and stimulate children's curiosity and enthusiasm in learning.

5.2. Innovative Forms

Traditional forms of game-based teaching in kindergarten are often monotonous, with teachers as the sole leaders, guiding children's participation without considering their interests. As game activities become increasingly rigid, children gradually lose interest, and the atmosphere during the games becomes dull. It's important to note that during the kindergarten stage, children naturally develop a fondness for their peers. Teachers can leverage this by fostering children's social and cooperative abilities, guiding them to adapt to rules and promoting independent thinking. Interaction among children primarily occurs in game activities, and rule-based games provide higher levels of interaction and frequency. Based on this, teachers can innovate and diversify the traditional game formats by designing games with a team-based approach and guiding children's active participation. Such team games are, in fact, a part of practical learning. Simply telling students to be united and think independently through words may be difficult for children at the kindergarten stage to understand. However, once students actively participate, they will understand the truth through practice and reflect on their own behaviors. Behind game-based teaching for young children is the shaping of their individual character and learning habits. It can silently nourish their minds and shape their sound personalities. Therefore, teachers should create a relaxed, joyful, and healthy learning atmosphere for children to receive good cultivation. Innovating and replacing game formats can continually capture children's attention and ensure the effectiveness of education.

For example, teachers can organize a "two-legged race" game, which requires high levels of cooperation among students. Before the activity starts, teachers can let children choose their favorite classmates as their partners, empowering children with the autonomy to make their own choices and leaving room for independent thinking. Subsequently, children need to train themselves, and in this process, conflicts and contradictions may arise. Teachers need to guide them in resolving conflicts and finding solutions in a timely manner. The combination of different personalities among children will produce different chemical effects, and teachers need such opportunities to guide children to follow rules and learn to think independently. Finally, teachers can provide appropriate feedback on the results of the game, and encourage students to engage in self-reflection. They can reflect on whether there were any inappropriate actions that led to the team's failure. In this process, teachers can flip the classroom by allowing children to experience the role of a "little teacher." Children can stand at the teacher's podium and share their thoughts, enabling them to experience the complexities of teaching and helping them correct any previous shortcomings. Afterwards, teachers can organize more cooperative games like this. Over time, children will naturally recognize the importance of teamwork and enhance their ability to independently solve problems while completing the game activities.

5.3. Innovative Materials

In previous educational processes, teachers often positioned themselves as the main focus of the classroom and imposed uniform standards on students during activities. However, at this stage, children's thinking processes and cognitive abilities are not yet fully developed, and their ideas are

often imaginative. Imposing strict control can diminish their enthusiasm for activities. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to respect the primary role of children in their learning and guide them towards independent learning to ensure the optimal effectiveness of game activities. The newly introduced educational policies emphasize the need for creating a relaxed and egalitarian learning atmosphere in kindergartens, considering the children's age and unique characteristics. Utilizing natural materials for game-based education can meet these requirements. Firstly, it can alleviate the financial burden on parents. By using natural resources, children can find developmental opportunities within their natural environment, without the need for additional auxiliary tools from teachers or parents. Secondly, engaging in practical activities with natural materials broadens children's perspectives and enhances their comprehensive abilities. The purpose of developing and utilizing natural resources is to help children establish correct values and achieve their "primary development," "comprehensive development," "active development," and "individual development." Integrating natural materials into game-based teaching ensures a lively classroom and stimulates children's creative potential. To achieve this, teachers need to deepen their understanding of natural materials and design suitable teaching content. Only then can natural resources be transformed into materials that cater to children's individual developmental characteristics. Children can absorb the necessary nutrients for their growth and cultivate their creativity and imagination.

There are many materials available to children in natural resources, each with its unique characteristics. Moreover, the availability of resources for teachers to use during manual games also changes with the seasons and the changes in flora and fauna. For example, in spring, teachers can guide students in planting activities using seeds. In summer, lotus flowers can be used as painting materials. In autumn, fallen leaves can be used for creative projects. In winter, teachers can lead students in observing snow. Alternatively, teachers can leverage the educational value of natural resources by allowing students to participate in the creative process. For instance, teachers can place a starfruit on the podium and let children observe it from different angles, expressing their views on its shape. Afterwards, children can use their own thinking to create artistic works, and the class can collectively select the best outcomes for encouragement and praise from the teacher. In this process, not only will children's observational abilities improve, learning to observe from diverse perspectives, but they will also experience the changing seasons and develop a connection with nature. Teachers should frequently communicate with children, understand their thoughts and ideas, and provide guidance based on their understanding. This is how children can transform the process of thinking into their own abilities.

6. Summary

The promotion and deepening of the new curriculum provide diversified choices for the future development of preschool children. Contemporary early childhood education should not be limited to traditional teaching methods. For young children, the mindset established during this stage has a significant impact on their future learning and life, determining their development trajectory. Therefore, teachers need to update their teaching concepts and approaches in a timely manner, exploring innovation and practice in early childhood education through diverse game-based teaching methods. This approach emphasizes the cultivation of children's thinking and character, enabling their physical and mental well-rounded development.

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