

*A. Kucheruk,
Student,
O. Zymovets,
Senior Lecturer,
Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University*

FORMATION OF COGNITIVE ACTIVITY IN YOUNGER SCHOOLCHILDREN DURING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING: STRATEGIES AND PEDAGOGICAL CONDITIONS

In contemporary primary education one of the key priorities is the cultivation of cognitive interest and activity, which underpin successful learning and holistic personal development. The Concept of the New Ukrainian School emphasizes the creation of learning environments that nurture proactive, independent, and critically thinking students capable of organizing their own activities and taking responsibility for educational outcomes [1]. Cognitive activity, as an integrated construct of intellectual, emotional, and volitional components, forms the foundation for students' engagement and motivation.

From a psychological perspective the development of cognitive activity in early elementary school is closely linked to the transition from informal to systematic learning. Children develop voluntary attention, memory, reasoning and speech. Their motivation to achieve success becomes a powerful driver that stimulates engagement in learning tasks [3]. Cognitive activity in English lessons is particularly valuable, as it requires the construction of a new linguistic system that interacts with students' native language knowledge. This process encourages attention, analytical thinking, problem-solving and active participation.

Teachers play a decisive role in fostering cognitive engagement. By recognizing individual student characteristics they can create conditions that stimulate curiosity, independent exploration and reflective thinking. Encouraging even minimal expressions of interest reinforces students' confidence and willingness to participate actively.

Levels of Cognitive Activity

Students demonstrate different levels of cognitive activity, ranging from passive reception to creative engagement:

- **Reproductive activity** – reproducing knowledge based on examples without deeper analysis.
- **Interpretive activity** – understanding content, establishing connections and applying knowledge in new situations.
- **Creative activity** – actively exploring ideas, generating hypotheses and experimenting with solutions [5].

The goal of instruction is to gradually move students from reproductive to creative cognitive activity through meaningful and challenging tasks.

Strategies to Develop Cognitive Activity

1. Independent and self-directed work

Independent exercises develop critical thinking, logic, problem-solving and self-regulation skills. By assigning tasks of varying complexity teachers account for individual abilities and promote active engagement.

2. Interactive pair and group work

Working collaboratively encourages communication, cooperation and joint problem-solving. Students exchange ideas, discuss solutions and engage in critical reflection on different perspectives.

3. Project-based and research activities

Projects connected to students' personal experiences (e.g., "My Favorite Animal," "Seasons of the Year," "Cultural Traditions") encourage inquiry, data collection, analysis and presentation. Such activities develop observation skills, logical reasoning and the ability to synthesize and apply knowledge in practice.

4. Play-based and gamified learning

Games, role-playing, songs and interactive exercises create an emotionally supportive environment, reduce anxiety and naturally stimulate curiosity. Through playful engagement students internalize new vocabulary, grammatical structures and communication patterns more effectively [2; 3].

5. Research-oriented tasks and problem-solving challenges

Students are encouraged to ask questions, formulate hypotheses and explore solutions collaboratively or individually. Simple research activities, such as conducting surveys, making charts or observing phenomena, foster analytical skills and independent learning habits.

6. Visualization and multimodal instruction

The use of visual materials (illustrations, diagrams, flashcards, multimedia content) activates memory, perception and understanding. Associative learning and multimodal stimuli help students establish stronger cognitive connections between language and meaning.

7. Cultural exploration and contextual learning

English lessons allow learners to explore foreign cultures, traditions and daily life practices, providing novelty and relevance. Understanding language in context strengthens intrinsic motivation and encourages deeper engagement with content.

8. Integrated emotional, intellectual and volitional engagement

Emotional involvement arises through exposure to poems, songs and cultural content. Volitional engagement is stimulated through active participation in recitation, performance or movement-based tasks. Intellectual engagement develops as students observe patterns, classify objects and analyze information within meaningful tasks.

Through the combination of these strategies teachers can create a dynamic learning environment in which students not only absorb material but also actively construct knowledge, reflect on ideas and make meaningful connections. English lessons, therefore, become a platform for developing strong cognitive skills, including observation, analysis, reasoning and creative thinking, as well as motivation for lifelong learning.

Fostering cognitive interest and activity in primary school students during English lessons is a complex and multifaceted process. It requires systematic planning, diverse teaching methods and sensitivity to developmental and individual differences. By

integrating independent work, collaborative projects, research activities, games and culturally relevant content teachers can promote active, motivated and self-directed learners. In such a learning environment students are not passive recipients but active participants who observe, explore, analyze and discuss ideas effectively laying the foundation for long-term academic success and personal growth.

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