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FORMATION OF SCHOOLCHILDREN'S PERSONAL INFORMATION CULTURE THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING LITERACY

Abstract

In an era of accelerated progress in information technology and the education system's growing digital transformation, the development of information culture among schoolchildren plays a special role. The purpose of the article is to theoretically substantiate and experimentally verify the effectiveness of pedagogical conditions and methods for the development of reading literacy in ninth grade students as a key component of the formation of their information culture in the context of digitalization of education. A fundamental aspect of this culture is reading literacy, which empowers students to comprehend, analyze, and evaluate a range of texts with a high degree of meaning. The present article presents the findings of a pedagogical experiment conducted to enhance the reading literacy of ninth-grade students at a rural educational institution in the Almaty region. The primary aim of this initiative was to lay the foundation for the development of the students' information culture. The study was conducted from March to May 2025 and consisted of two phases: a diagnostic phase and a formative phase. The initial phase of the study consisted of a 10-question survey. The second phase of the project entailed implementing a curriculum comprising thematic modules focused on developing skills in meaningful reading, critical analysis, and source verification. The results of the formative experiment showed positive gains in students' reading literacy in the experimental group. The theoretical significance of the study lies in its exploration of the role of reading literacy in students' lives and in substantiating the connection between reading literacy and personal information literacy. Its practical significance lies in the development and testing of a set of tasks that can be used in educational practice to enhance students' reading literacy as part of personal information literacy.

Keywords: reading literacy, personal information culture, critical thinking, schoolchildren, digital resources.

Introduction

Today, information has become a vital resource and a fundamental value for humanity. The use of information to manage individuals and society, combined with the growth in information volumes amid rapid progress in information and communication technologies, has led to the transition to the information society era. The information society presents broad opportunities for self-realization, providing everyone with access to information and knowledge. However, the abundance of data poses new challenges. One of the main difficulties is selecting and effectively using truly valuable information from large-scale data flows [1].

In 2000, UNESCO developed an Information for All Program. One of the goals of this program was to expand access to public-domain information by systematizing, digitizing, and ensuring its preservation.

The establishment of an information culture among young people is one of the most significant challenges confronting society. An individual with a well-developed information culture can not only locate relevant information but also evaluate its credibility and use it effectively. The concept of "information culture" has been the focus of active research by scientists since the late 20th century. The first documented use of the term is attributed to Mariam Ginman in her 1993 publication [2]. Ginman's definition of information culture as a receptive entity to changes and modifications is a key point of departure for the present study. In summary, the prevailing paradigm posits that information culture should be regarded as a pivotal and optimal state for achieving success and maintaining an organization's competitiveness. The subsequent reference to this concept is found in Lev Manovich's 2001 work, "The Language of New Media" [3]. In this work, the author draws parallels between information culture and visual culture, asserting that the former encompasses methods of presenting information through various cultural objects. These cultural objects include road signs, airport and train station displays, television

screens, and so on. Oliver (2017) defines information culture as an environment in which information is managed and used effectively and efficiently [4].

According to Gendina (2003), librarians were the first to draw public attention to the phenomenon of the personal information culture. This development coincided with the integration of the Internet into daily life, necessitating that librarians educate users in the art of information search. Gendina, the author of numerous publications on this topic, rightly asserts that the need for information training is a considerable problem. She defines the individual's information culture as a “combination of an informational view of the world and a complex of knowledge aimed at the most effective satisfaction of personal information requests through the use of both traditional and modern information tools and technologies” [5].

Information culture is much more than just mastery of computer programs or programming skills. It is, first, a deep understanding of the principles of information work [6]. Kvitko identifies the following levels of implementation of information culture:

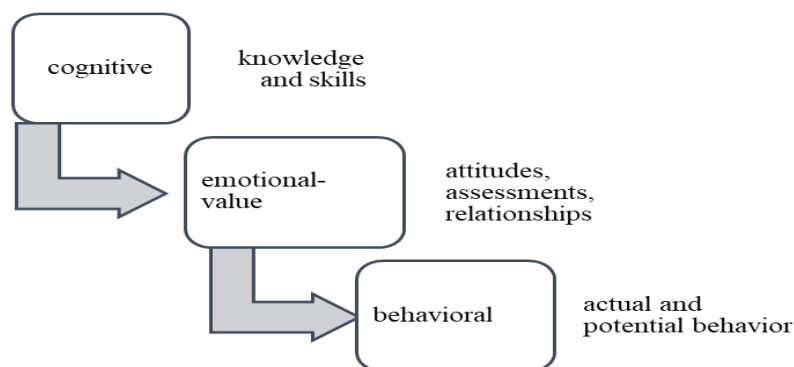


Figure 1 – Levels of implementation of information culture

Note: Compiled by authors

The most important component of an individual's information culture is reading literacy, which facilitates the comprehension, analysis, and critical evaluation of information. Since 1991, the term reading literacy has been associated with the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. The IEA initiated the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, which defined reading literacy in a broad functional context, combining this term not only with reading techniques but also with the opportunity to reflect on what was read and use it to achieve personal and social goals, primarily for further education.

In the studies of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), the concept of reading literacy has been defined since 2000 as the ability to comprehend, interpret, and utilize written texts to reflect on them and to accomplish specific objectives, including the expansion of knowledge and the enhancement of opportunities for engagement in social life [7]. The evolution of ICT has led to a shift in the definition of reading literacy, encompassing both traditional printed texts and digital materials. According to the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) report, in the 21st century, reading encompasses digital platforms, necessitating the ability to integrate various sources, manage uncertainty, and differentiate between facts and opinions [8]. The current focus on PISA skills is not driven by testing students' ability to read professionally, but by a focus on constructive, expansive, and deep reflective skills involved in the reading process to extract meaning from texts or make connections with them [9].

In today's world, necessary information can be found through mass media, by viewing films or pertinent videos, or by exploring online resources. Therefore, the younger generation must be equipped with new competencies and skills [10]. These skills are referred to as '21st Century Skills', defined as the knowledge, skills, literacy, and expertise necessary for individuals to be successful in professional and daily life contexts [11].

It is imperative to acknowledge the pervasive influence of social networks, which have emerged as the predominant sources of information for teenagers. Consequently, young people

have begun to read less because they spend more time on the Internet, especially on messengers and video services. This phenomenon can be attributed to two main factors: first, the limited time available to readers; second, the increased accessibility of concise book summaries and abridged versions of literary works [12]. Prensky (2009) notes that teenagers nowadays allocate less than 5,000 hours a year to reading, while devoting more than 10,000 hours to mobile phones [13].

Yessenbekova et al. believe that modern young people need to develop media literacy to critically analyze information on the Internet, as well as effective time management to minimize potential negative impacts on health and intellectual development [14]. However, Yelubaeva et al.'s research shows that Kazakhstan is at an early stage of adapting media literacy into the educational process due to limited resources, a lack of training, and uneven institutional support [15].

According to reports by DataReportal, as of January 2025, the number of social media users in Kazakhstan stood at approximately 15.7 million, constituting 75.7% of the total population. A comparison of the present year with the previous one reveals an increase of 11.2%. Furthermore, the most popular social platform was TikTok, with 15.7 million subscribers aged 18 and older. The second most popular platform is Instagram, with 12.4 million subscribers. According to 2024 data, the cities of Almaty and Astana lead in user numbers, with coverage of 91% [16].

Zabokritskaya believes that the most pressing problems facing modern youth in the online space include leakage of personal information, disruption of real-life social ties, and involvement in criminal and destructive groups [17].

Effective information processing and critical thinking depend directly on the ability to understand, analyze and interpret texts. However, reading literacy, which forms the basis of information culture, has remained understudied in Kazakhstan. Although some domestic studies (A.Zh. Myrzakhmetova et al., B.I. Karipbaev) examine issues related to the development of information culture, reading literacy remains unaddressed. Other studies (A.V. Semkin, G.K. Kadyrova, and E.R. Arziyeva) have focused on assessing functional literacy through international tests (PISA, PIRLS) but do not delve into the development of information culture. This issue should be considered comprehensively, drawing on data from several sciences, such as linguodidactics, linguopedagogy, psycholinguistics, and neuroscience.

Materials and methods of research

The study was conducted from March to May 2025 at a rural school in the Almaty region. Fifty-two ninth-grade students, aged 14-15 years, participated in the study. The study comprised two primary phases: a diagnostic experiment and a formative experiment.

The present study employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative analytical methods. A survey and a test were designed to ascertain the initial level of reading literacy and information culture. To assess progress, students completed a pre- and post-test on reading literacy, and a comparative analysis of their results was conducted. The initial stage comprised a Google Forms survey, encompassing inquiries concerning reading habits, strategies for searching and verifying information, and a reading literacy test aligned with the international PISA framework.

In the second stage, the students were divided into two equal groups: a control group (26 students) and an experimental group (26 students). The control group received instruction in the traditional format, while the experimental group utilised a set of tasks designed to develop reading literacy as a basis of personal information culture. The authors of this article designed the complex of tasks based on the principles of inquiry-based learning.

The course was conducted over six weeks, with one 45-minute lesson per week. It was grounded in the principles of interactive learning and incorporated a range of techniques. These included the analysis and discussion of texts from a variety of genres, such as news articles, English textbooks, and social media posts. Exercises were grouped according to six criteria of reading and information literacy: identifying the main idea of the text, logical coherence of retelling, comparing information from multiple sources, fact-checking, criteria for evaluating sources (visual, likes, authority), and plagiarism. Students were presented with a variety of texts,

from journalistic to popular science. The assignments also included working with several articles on the same topic, news articles, and blog excerpts containing controversial facts. The exercises combined individual, pair, and group work.

Results and their discussion

The questionnaire was created based on the works of scientists, namely: the ideas of L. Manovich (2001) on the interaction of visual and information culture, N. Gendina (2003) on the formation of an individual's information worldview, as well as U. Yessenbekova et al. (2023), who consider media and information literacy in the digital age.

How often do you read texts (books, articles, blogs, news) outside of school assignments?

52 responses

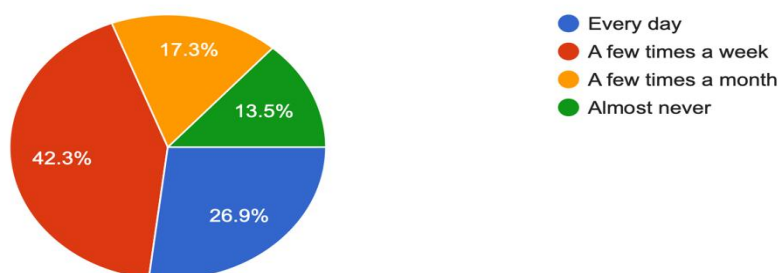


Figure 2 – Frequency of reading texts outside of school assignments

Note: Compiled by authors

In response to the initial query, 42.3% of students reported engaging in reading activities several times a week, even without school assignments. This suggests that reading is integral to schoolchildren's lives. A further 26.9% of students reported reading daily, which indicates a high level of motivation and a robust habit of independent reading. 17.3% of participants reported reading several times a month, i.e., on an irregular basis, with this practice seemingly depending on their mood or the availability of free time. A small proportion of respondents, 13.5%, reported never engaging in such activities.

The majority of respondents (approximately 69%) read regularly, at least several times a week. This demonstrates that more than half of the students are interested in reading. However, approximately a third of respondents admitted to rarely or not reading outside of school, indicating a need for new methods and incentives to develop their reading motivation.

When reading a text, how confident are you in identifying the main idea?

52 responses

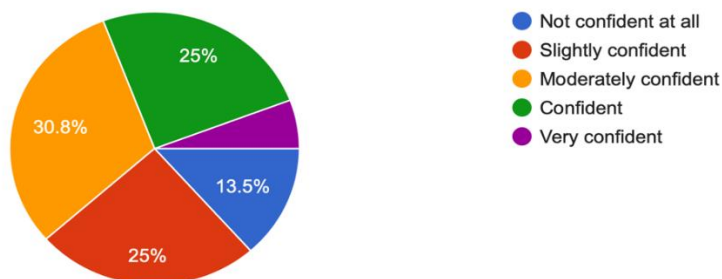


Figure 3 – Students' confidence in identifying the main idea of the text

Note: Compiled by authors

The findings revealed that approximately 55.8% of respondents from the moderately confident and confident categories demonstrated a reasonable level of confidence. However, only a small proportion of respondents (approximately 6%) expressed complete confidence in identifying the main idea.

Concurrently, over 38% of students expressed low confidence (not confident at all or slightly confident), indicating variability in their comprehension skills. These results are consistent with the findings of Ansharul Fuqaha and Wartim Wartim (2023), who, in their study “The difficulties of determining main idea on students' reading comprehension”, note that students often struggle to identify the key idea of a text [22]. The researchers attribute this to some factors, including insufficient vocabulary, difficulty distinguishing between the general theme and the specific main idea, and a lack of effective text-processing techniques. These challenges directly impact students' self-esteem, as the more difficult it is for them to identify the main idea, the lower their confidence in reading literacy.

When you find information online, what is the first thing you usually check?

52 responses

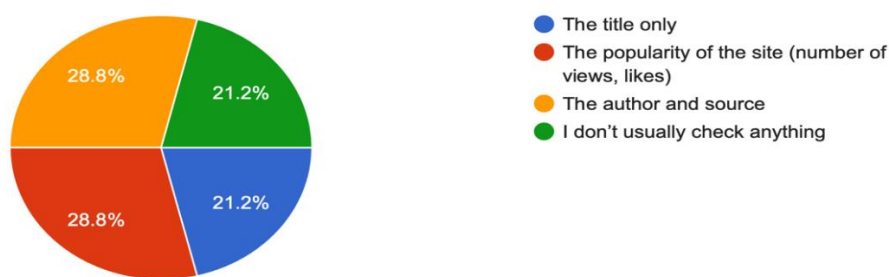


Figure 4 – The first thing students check when searching for information on the Internet

Note: Compiled by authors

The diagram shows that the predominant response categories are website popularity and author/source verification (28.8% each). This finding indicates that approximately one-third of students are more likely to attend to external indicators of information reliability, such as the authority of a resource or the presence of an author's name. However, a significant proportion of respondents (21.2%) limit their review to only the title, while an additional 21.2% do not verify the source at all, indicating a superficial approach to information perception.

Consequently, approximately 42.4% of participants do not critically verify the reliability of information, reflecting a low level of critical thinking and an insufficient information culture. However, it is encouraging to note that almost a third of students express a desire to verify the author and source of information, which can be regarded as a positive development.

What strategies do you use when working with a new text?

52 responses

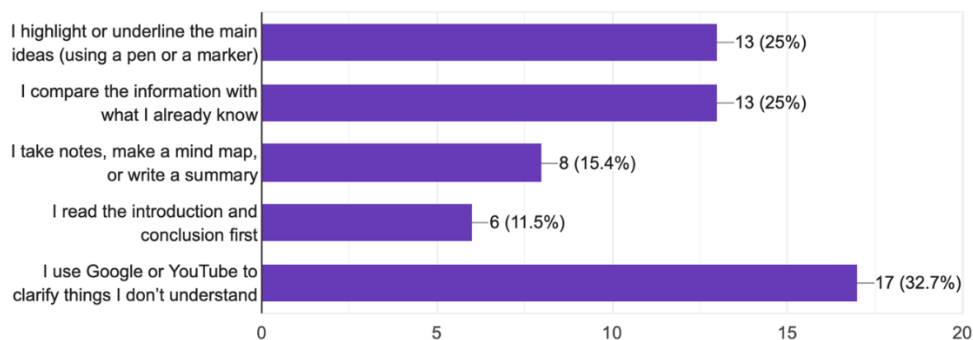


Figure 5 – Ways to work with new text

Note: Compiled by authors

The data indicates that the predominant strategy employed by schoolchildren is the utilization of online resources, such as Google and YouTube, to clarify ambiguous points. This option was selected by nearly a third of respondents (32.7%). This finding suggests a high degree of reliance on digital resources in textual work. Indeed, the survey data confirms numerous studies that Google and YouTube have been the most popular platforms for information search among schoolchildren for decades. For example, in their article “Learning Together with YouTube? Adolescents' Collective Use of Explanatory Audiovisual Content”, Honkomp-Wilkens et al. concluded that YouTube has become an integral part of the acquisition of knowledge and skills among modern schoolchildren [23].

The second most prevalent strategies are those oriented towards actively engaging with the text, such as identifying key ideas (25%) and comparing new information with existing knowledge (25%). These techniques are indicative of fundamental competencies in reading for meaning, and they illustrate that a proportion of students can comprehend the significance of analyzing the structure and content of the text.

Less common strategies employed by the participants included the creation of their own notes and mind maps, with a frequency of 15.4%, and the practice of pre-reading the introduction and conclusion, with a frequency of 11.5%.

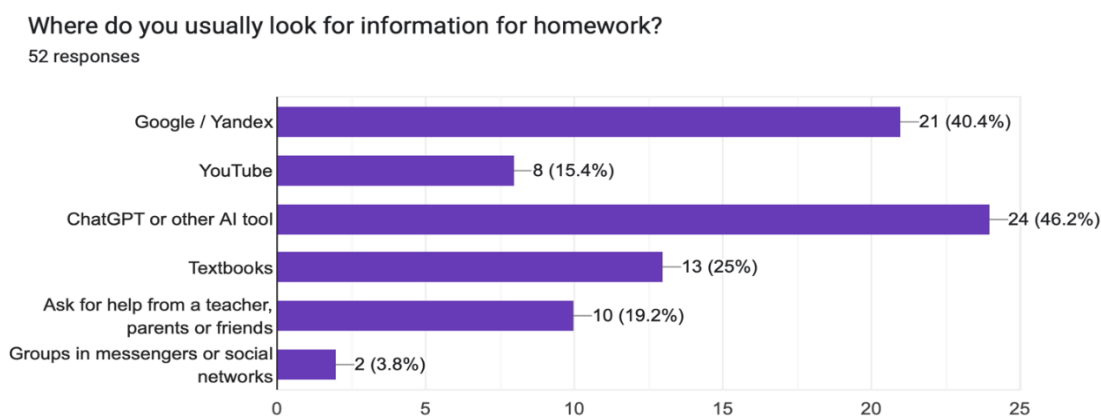


Figure 6 – Main sources of information used by students to complete homework
Note: Compiled by authors

When you use someone else's text or image in a school project, do you mention the author or source?
52 responses

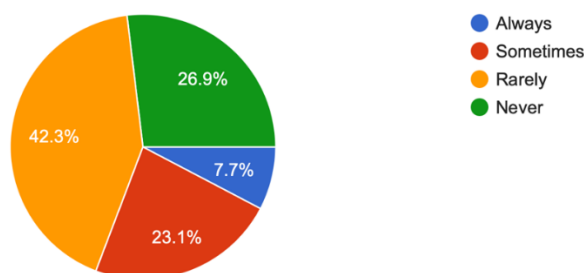


Figure 7 – Indicating the author and source when using others' materials in school projects
Note: Compiled by authors

The most common sources of information used for academic tasks are artificial intelligence (e.g., ChatGPT) and search engines (e.g., Google/Yandex). This finding suggests that students have a high level of trust in digital resources. According to traditional sources, such as textbooks

and teacher/parent assistance, the utilization of instant messaging applications and social media for educational purposes is minimal. The present data corroborates extant research demonstrating that Google has remained the most popular source of information for many years. Yet, teenagers still struggle to assess the credibility of online information. Indeed, in 2016, researchers at Stanford University's Graduate School of Education reported that 80% of American adolescents were unable to differentiate between a credible news article and sponsored content [24].

The findings indicate that a minority of students (7.7%) consistently adhere to the principles of academic honesty by citing all sources. The majority of respondents either engage in this practice occasionally (65.4%) or do not engage in it at all (26.9%). This may be indicative of a lack of awareness of the significance of citations or a deficiency in students' information culture. The results align with Désiron and Petko's work, "Academic dishonesty when doing homework: How digital technologies are put to bad use in secondary schools". They stated that the most common form of digital dishonesty is plagiarism, involving copying and pasting content from the Internet [25].

The preliminary reading literacy assessment indicated that the majority of students in both the control and experimental groups demonstrated an average level of reading literacy. The mean score for the control group was 56.8, whereas the experimental group's mean score was 57.4 (on a 100-point scale). The findings of this study demonstrate the comparability of the initial conditions, a prerequisite for validating the pedagogical experiment.

Table 1- Pre- and post-assessment results by criteria

№	Criterion	Description	Before the experiment	After the experiment	Change (%)	Interpretation of results
1	Identifying the main idea of the text	Capability to determine the key message and express it in one's own words	42% of students perform accurately	65% of students perform accurately	+23%	Improvement in semantic reading skills
2	Logical coherence of retelling	Consistency and causal connections between ideas	40% of students can consistently retell the text	75% of students have a coherent and logically connected narrative	+35%	Enhanced ability to structure and organize content
3	Comparing information from multiple sources	Ability to compare arguments of different authors	38% successfully compare viewpoints	63% successfully compare viewpoints	+25%	Development of critical thinking skills
4	Fact-checking	Use of verification criteria (date, source, evidence)	25% systematically verify facts	70% systematically verify facts	+45%	Significant progress in assessing the reliability of information
5	Criteria for evaluating sources (visual, likes, authority)	Assessing reliability based on superficial vs. substantive indicators	71% rely on design and popularity	28% rely on design and popularity	-43%	Decreased trust in questionable sites
6	Plagiarism	Ability to create original text and avoid copying	8% always cite the author	77% always cite the author	+69%	Growth in academic honesty

Note: Compiled by authors

Table 1 demonstrates positive dynamics across all the criteria we identified. We achieved the greatest success in developing academic integrity. While the survey showed that only approximately 8% of students mentioned authors each time, by the end of the formative experiment, this figure had increased to 77%.

A detailed analysis of specific tasks revealed several difficulties. Initially, students encountered challenges in identifying the text's key idea. It is noteworthy that students frequently recounted the text in a fragmentary manner, exhibiting a lack of logical connection between sentences. Secondly, when working with two or more sources, many participants found it difficult to compare points of view. Thirdly, it was discovered that approximately 60% of participants lacked consistent criteria for verifying information. The majority of students relied solely on the website's visual qualities and the number of views.

After implementing the six-week reading literacy development course, students in the experimental group were retested. The data showed significant changes compared to the control group.

The number of students who know how to determine the reliability of information has increased by 45%. The proportion of students relying solely on external indicators of reliability has decreased from 71% to 28%. This indicates a shift toward more mindful online information consumption.

We also saw improvements in one of the key reading literacy skills – identifying the main idea of a text. The proportion of students who confidently and accurately identified the main idea of a text increased by 23%.

The students' ability to retell text logically also improved: the proportion of participants able to retell text consistently increased from 40% to 75%. This indicates that the students learned to correctly construct logical connections in the text.

The ability to compare different sources deserves special attention. A 25% increase in the number of students who competently analyse sources has been observed. This indicator reflects the development of students' analytical and critical thinking.

Table 2- Dynamics of reading literacy test results

Indicator	Control group	Experimental group
Average score before the experiment	56.8	57.4
Average score after the experiment	59.2	72.6
Increase	+4.2%	+26.4%
Note: Compiled by authors		

Table 2 shows that the control group exhibited a modest increase (approximately 2.4 points), likely due to the natural accumulation of experience during the learning process.

In the experimental group, the increase was 15.2 points, representing a 26.4% increase, which was statistically significant.

This finding indicates that the proposed method had a substantial impact on students' comprehension, analysis, and critical perception skills.

Conclusion

A study conducted from March to May 2025 demonstrated that the development of reading skills is directly linked to students' information literacy. An experiment involving 52 ninth-graders from a rural school in the Almaty region revealed an increase in the level of comprehension, analysis, and critical evaluation of information among participants in the experimental group.

A comparative analysis of data obtained during the diagnostic and final stages demonstrated significant improvements among students who completed the reading literacy development course, including their ability to read meaningfully, critically comprehend texts, and work with various information sources. Repeated testing confirmed a statistically significant increase in average reading literacy test scores in the experimental group compared with the control group.

Consequently, the implementation of the developed set of tasks contributes to the development of a more conscious and responsible attitude toward information among schoolchildren, as well as to their ability to verify the reliability of sources and substantiate their own positions.

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ОҚУ САУАТТЫЛЫҒЫН ДАМУ ТУРАСЫ АҚПАРАТТЫҚ МӘДЕНИЕТТІ ҚАЛЫПТАСТЫРУ

Аннотация

Ақпараттық технологиялардың қарқынды дамуы мен білім беру жүйесін цифрландыру дәуірінде оқушылардың ақпараттық мәдениетін дамыту ерекше рөл атқарады. Мақаланың мақсаты - білім беруді цифрландыру жағдайында олардың ақпараттық мәдениетін қалыптастырудың негізгі құрамдас бөлігі ретінде тоғызыншы сынып оқушыларының оқу сауаттылығын дамытудың педагогикалық шарттары мен әдістемелерінің тиімділігін теориялық негіздеу және эксперименттік тексеру болып табылады. Бұл мәдениеттің негізгі аспектісі – оқушыларға әртүрлі мәтіндерді түсінуге, талдауға және бағалауға мүмкіндік беретін оқу сауаттылығы. Осы мақалада Алматы облысының ауылдық білім беру мектептерінің бірінде тоғызыншы сынып оқушыларының оқу сауаттылығын арттыру мақсатында жүргізілген педагогикалық эксперименттің нәтижелері баяндалады. Бұл бастаманың негізгі мақсаты оқушылардың ақпараттық мәдениетін дамытуға негіз қалау болды. Зерттеу 2025 жылдың наурызынан мамырына дейін жүргізілді және екі кезеңнен тұрды: диагностикалық және қалыптастырушы. Зерттеудің бастапқы кезеңі он сұрақтан тұратын сауалнаманы қамтыды. Екінші кезеңде мағыналы оқу, сыни талдау және дереккөздердің дұрыстығын тексеру дағдыларын дамытуға бағытталған тақырыптық модульдерді қамтитын оқу бағдарламасы әзірленді. Қалыптастырушы эксперименттің нәтижелері эксперименттік топтағы оқушылардың оқу сауаттылығы деңгейінде оң динамиканы көрсетті. Зерттеудің теориялық маңыздылығы оқушылардың өміріндегі оқу сауаттылығының ролін ашу және оқу сауаттылығы мен тұлғалық ақпараттық мәдениеті арасындағы байланысты негіздеу болып табылады. Практикалық маңыздылығы – білім беру практикасында оқушылардың оқу сауаттылығын жеке тұлғаның ақпараттық мәдениетінің құрамдас бөлігі ретінде дамыту үшін қолдануға болатын тапсырмалар кешенін әзірлеу және сынақтан өткізу.

Негізгі сөздер: оқу сауаттылығы, жеке тұлғаның ақпараттық мәдениеті, сыни ойлау, оқушылар, цифрлық ресурстар.

ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ ИНФОРМАЦИОННОЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ ЛИЧНОСТИ ШКОЛЬНИКОВ ЧЕРЕЗ РАЗВИТИЕ ЧИТАТЕЛЬСКОЙ ГРАМОТНОСТИ

Аннотация

В эпоху стремительного развития информационных технологий и цифровизации системы образования развитие информационной культуры у школьников играет особую роль. Фундаментальным аспектом этой культуры является читательская грамотность, которая позволяет учащимся понимать, анализировать и оценивать разнообразные тексты. Цель статьи заключается в теоретическом обосновании и экспериментальной проверке эффективности педагогических условий и методик развития читательской грамотности учащихся девятых классов как ключевого компонента формирования их информационной культуры в условиях цифровизации образования. В настоящей статье излагаются результаты педагогического эксперимента, который был проведен с целью повышения читательской грамотности учащихся девятых классов в одном из сельских образовательных школ Алматинской области. Основной целью этой инициативы было заложить основу для развития информационной культуры учащихся. Исследование проводилось с марта по май 2025 года и состояло из двух этапов: диагностического и формирующего. Начальный этап исследования включал опрос из десяти вопросов. На втором этапе была разработана учебная программа, включающая тематические модули, направленные на развитие навыков осмысленного чтения, критического анализа и проверки достоверности источников. Результаты формирующего эксперимента показали положительную динамику в уровне читательской грамотности учащихся в экспериментальной группе. Теоретическая значимость исследования заключается в раскрытии роли читательской грамотности в жизни учеников и в обосновании связи между читательской грамотностью и информационной культурой личности. Практическая значимость состоит в разработке и апробации комплекса заданий, которые могут быть использованы в образовательной практике для развития читательской грамотности школьников как компонента информационной культуры личности.

Ключевые слова: грамотность чтения, информационная культура личности, критическое мышление, школьники, цифровые ресурсы.

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