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The Intrinsic Logic and Basic Strategies of the Development of Narrative Ability in Young Children's Painting Activities

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Abstract: "Children are born with a natural talent for artistic expression and can convey their unique understanding of the world through various symbolic languages and media." Among them, painting is an art form that children enjoy. It not only records the trajectory of children's growth but also reflects their unique thoughts and feelings. As a prelude to language development, language serves as a tool for communication and thinking, and narrative ability is a crucial skill in children's daily lives, thus receiving widespread attention. This study aims to explore the influence of painting activities on the narrative ability development of middle class children. The results show that painting activities can promote the improvement of narrative ability of middle class children. Painting activities have different influences on various dimensions of narrative ability. The children in the experimental class performed significantly better than those in the control class in terms of narrative ability, especially in the four aspects of "narrative content structure", "event narration length", "theme relevance" and "narrative sentence structure", with p values all <0.05.

1. Problem Presentation

In preschool children's art education, painting activities are an important part. They can not only arouse children's interest in learning but also promote the all-round development of children's abilities. Paivio once pointed out that when children start to have the ability to express themselves in language, the development of their painting and language begins to interact and progress together[1]. This indicates that painting activities can subtly promote the development of children's language ability. The thinking mode of young children is mainly intuitive and image- based. They rely more on the concrete objects they see and touch. At this stage, children begin to use simple language or symbols to express the concepts and experiences they have gained. Painting and language are like two brushes for children to express their inner world, jointly depicting the wonderful ideas in their minds and further enhancing their imagination and language expression skills[2].

The "Guidelines for Kindergarten Education (Trial)" proposes that "various means such as books, paintings, and others should be utilized to arouse children's interest in books, reading, and writing, and cultivate their pre- reading and pre-writing skills. " It also emphasizes that "language ability

develops in the process of application. The key to developing children's language is to create an environment where they want to speak, dare to speak, like to speak, have opportunities to speak, and receive positive responses. " The Guidelines for Quality Assessment of Kindergarten Care and Education" also mentions that "importance should be attached to children expressing and representing their experiences in games, reading picture books, observations, etc. through drawing, storytelling, and other means. Teachers should listen to each child one-on-one and record their expressions truthfully."

This indicates that the development of children's language ability is a multi-dimensional process. Interdisciplinary education can help improve children's language skills and social abilities comprehensively[3].

The expressive ability of language plays a significant role in the development of young children. The " Guidelines for Kindergarten Education (Trial)" in the language domain states that children should be encouraged to express their thoughts and emotions bravely and clearly, and to attempt to explain and describe simple things or processes. This guideline not only highlights the importance of early language education for young children but also emphasizes that by providing support and guidance for children's language expression, their narrative skills can be further developed. The language goals in the "Guidelines for Children's Learning and Development Aged 3-6" indicate that children in the middle class should be able to narrate in a coherent manner the things they have seen, heard, or experienced. Therefore, during the language development process of children in this age group, we should attach great importance to the development of their narrative skills.

The preschool stage is a crucial period for the development of children's narrative skills. During this time, children's language expression and narrative abilities can be significantly enhanced, and they can initially use simple language to organize and express their experiences and thoughts[4].

2. Theoretical Basis

Sachs and Eisenberg's research on children's narrative ability shows that children's cognitive levels continuously improve as they grow older, which directly affects their narrative skills. As young children grow, they start to establish connections with the outside world, develop interests in certain things, and build cooperative and communicative relationships with others. During this process, they form their own unique worldviews and begin to try to express their inner thoughts and true feelings, hoping to receive responses from others. This way, they enrich their cognitive abilities[5].

Heath emphasizes that narrative skills are closely related to social culture and the social environment. Young children from different cultures and societies will present their own narrative styles, and these narrative styles reflect their life experiences, cultural concepts and value orientations. This indicates that children's narrative abilities are not only influenced by individual development but also by the social and cultural environment around them [6].

Catherine Snow holds that children's language skills, such as vocabulary level and grammar, have a significant impact on their narrative ability. Melanie Noel's research also shows that preschool children's oral narrative ability is related to their personality, and some children with a high level of emotionality tend to perform poorly in vocabulary acquisition.These studies collectively reveal the multi-dimensional influencing factors of children's narrative ability.

Rosemary Lever's research indicates that young children can enhance their understanding of narrative structure through interaction. In the interactive daily teaching activities, young children pay more attention to the plot development of stories. We can guide them to focus on the main clues or elements in the story and adopt a dialogic reading approach to increase the frequency of communication between adults and children. This method can promote children's narrative skills

and narrative abilities[7].

Gross Julien's experiment found that drawing can enhance young children's oral narrative ability in emotional experiences.

Similarly, Papandreou also pointed out that drawing can evoke children's personal experiences, prompt the generation of new ideas and strategies, and assist children in fully expressing their thoughts in language. Through drawing, children can have a more intuitive understanding of the world, not only providing them with diverse language materials but also enriching their spiritual experiences and aesthetic tastes, promoting their vivid and concrete understanding of the world. Therefore, teachers can use drawing activities to stimulate children's creative thinking and thereby improve their narrative ability.

3. Research Methods

3.1 Research Process

The subjects of this study were Class One and Class Two of the middle class in S Kindergarten of City W. These two classes were randomly divided into an experimental class and a control class, each with 25 students. The children's narrative ability was evaluated based on the "Multicolored Spectrum Language Evaluation Standard". Before the experiment began, the narrative theme "My Weekend" was used to understand the current level of narrative ability of the middle class children. During the experiment, the narrative ability of the children in the experimental class was intervened through painting activities in their curriculum. The experimental class carried out activities such as "I'm the Duty Manager", "My Favorite Thing in Kindergarten", "My National Day Holiday", and "If I Were to Go to the Great Wall", while the control class continued with its regular teaching activities. In the later stage of the experiment, both classes were asked to narrate on the theme of "My Weekend", and the "Multicolor Spectrum Language Evaluation Standard" was used to assess the narrative abilities of the children. Through data comparison and analysis, the development of the children's narrative abilities in various dimensions and whether there were differences between the two classes were examined. The reasons behind these differences were analyzed and effective suggestions were put forward[8].

3.2 Research Subjects

The experiment took two parallel classes from the middle class of S Kindergarten in W City as samples, each class having 25 children, making a total of 50 children as the research subjects (Table 1). The selected children's ages were all in line with the age range of the middle class, and the teacher allocation was consistent. In terms of experimental design, the researchers used random sampling to divide the experimental class and the control class, without any subjective bias. Each class had 25 children, and all these children participated in the pre- and post-experiment tests, ensuring the consistency and validity of the experimental results[9].

4. Research Tools

4.1 Experimental Design

The narrative ability assessment tool adopted in this experiment is the "Multicolored Spectrum Language Evaluation Standard ", which also refers to the modified evaluation standard by Wu Yan and has been slightly adjusted. This assessment tool mainly consists of eight dimensions, each of which contains three different levels(Table 2), and is scored 1, 2, or 3 respectively. For details,

please refer to Table 1-2 below:

Table 1 Research Subject

class	number of people	age
Experimental class	25	4 to 5 years old
Control class	25	4 to 5 years old

Table 2 Evaluation Criteria for the Colorful Spectrum Language

Evaluation dimensions	Evaluation criteria
The structure of the story content	1.The six elements of a story: time, place, characters, and events (occurrence, process, and outcome) as told by young children. It only covers 1-2 aspects. 2.The narration should cover 3 to 4 aspects. 3. A story should contain six elements.
Length of event description	1.The narrative consists of only a few simple sentences. (This dimension is based on the overall lengthof the child's storytelling as a reference for determining its lengthShort review) 2.The narrative is of medium length. 3. The narrative is long and rich in content.
Relevance to the topic	1.Unclear transitions between ideas; distracted attention (affected by other factors); broken storylines andDiscontinuous. 2. The storylines are vague and can only be sustained for a short while (such as a few consecutive Relevance to the topic sentences); children simply interact with each other.Contradictory clues are woven into a one-sided story. 3.a coherent narrative; link events together to form a continuous storyline.The plot thread; rarely deviates from the development of the story.
The Application of Dialogue	1.There is little or no dialogue in the story. 2. There are dialogues, but the conversations between characters are vague and brief. 3.There are numerous dialogues, and each can last for several lines. The conversations between characters are meaningful, encompassing thoughts, emotions and information.
time markers application	1. When telling a story, one can use simple temporal conjunctions (at that time, then, now). 2. Sometimes more complex time markers are used (such as "in the past", "later", "until...", "for a while", "next", etc.).eadverbs to indicate when an event occurs (at night, the next morning, many years ago). 3.Continuously use the more complex time expressions listed in Level
Expressiveness	1.No or very little use of intonation; presenting the story with a monotonous tone, without varying the tone or voice effects according to different characters. 2.Occasionally use sound effects or other forms of expression (such as character tones, emphasis, or singing), or use both. 3. Constant use of sound effects; vivid character tones; highly expressive narration.
Vocabulary level	1. Mainly use simple language and seldom employ adjectives. 2. Use vocabulary at Level 1, sometimes employing descriptive and expressive language, and use some adjectives. 3. Use vocabulary at Level 2, employing a wide range of words, including adjectives and adverbs.
Narrativesentence structure	1.Use simple, disjointed, and parallel sentences or sentence components. 2. Use sentences at level 1, but include prepositional phrases and complex sentences in the narration. 3. A large number of frequently used sentence structures, including adverbial clauses, attributive clauses, participle phrases, or a combination of several of these.

4.2 Reliability and Validity Testing

This study mainly utilized SPSS 27.0 statistical software for data processing. By conducting a difference test on the pre-test and post-test data of the two classes of children, it aimed to analyze the significant differences between the two sets of data, evaluate the changes before and after the experimental intervention, and ensure the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the data analysis[10].

5. Research Results and Discussion

The scores of the eight dimensions of ability are as follows. The significance P values reached 0.805; 0.780; 1.000; 1.000; 0.782; 0.322; 0. 771; 0. 771 respectively. All the significance P values of the dimensions are greater than 0. 05, which fully demonstrates the homogeneity test of the experimental class and the control class before the experiment[11].

In the early stage of the experiment, to verify the consistency of narrative ability development levels between the experimental class and the control class, the narrative theme "My Weekend" was adopted. Based on the "Multicolored Spectrum Language Evaluation Standard", an independent sample T-test was conducted on the pre-test narrative content from multiple dimensions such as story content structure, event narration length, and theme relevance. The data are detailed in Tables 3 and 4[12].

Table 3 Comparison of the Total Scores of Narrative Ability in the Experimental Class and the Control Class before the Experiment

class	number of people	Aleverage total score	standard deviation	t-value p-value
Experimental class	25	12.88	1.364	0.362 0.764
Control class	25	12.76	1.234	

From Table 3, it can be seen that the average total scores of narrative ability in the experimental class and the control class in the pre-test were relatively close, with the experimental class scoring 12.88 and the control class 12.76. The t-value was 0.326 and the p- value was greater than 0.05, indicating that at the pre-test stage of the experiment, the language development levels of the two classes were similar, and there was no significant difference in narrative ability[13].

Table 4 Comparison of Differences in Scores of Each Dimension of Narrative Ability between the Experimental Class and the Control Class in the Pre-test

dimension	class	number of peop	erage value	standard deviation	t	p
Narrativecontent structure	Experimental class Control class	25 25	1.76 1.72	0.597 0.542	0.248	0.805
Length of event description	Experimental class Control class	25 25	1.60 1.56	0.500 0.507	0.281	0.780
Relevance to the topic	Experimental class Control class	25 25	2.16 2.16	0.374 0.374	0.000	1.000
The Application of Dialogue	Experimental class Control class	25 25	1.12 1.12	0.332 0.332	0.000	1.000
The Use of Time Markers	Experimental class Control class	25 25	1.56 1.52	0.507 0.510	0.278	0.782
Expressiveness	Experimental class Control class	25 25	1.96 2.00	0.2000 0.000	-1.000	0.322
Vocabulary level	Experimental class Control class	25 25	1.36 1.32	0.490 0.476	0.293	0.771
Narrative sentence structure	Experimental class Control class	25 25	1.32 1.36	0.476 0.490	-0.293	0.771

Table 4 shows that before the narrative intervention, there were no significant differences between the two classes in the various sub-dimensions of narrative ability. This further provides strong support for the subsequent experimental results to truly reflect the effect of the experimental intervention measures, eliminating the interference of different initial dimensional abilities on the experimental results.

5.1 Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Differences in the Experimental Class

To verify whether there were any differences in the narrative ability development levels of the children in the experimental class between the pre-test and post-test stages, a comparison was made of the total scores and detailed scores of each dimension of their narrative ability development. The data are detailed in Tables5and 6.

Table 5 Comparison of the Total Scores of Narrative Ability before and after the Experiment in the Experimental Class

Pre- and post-test	number of peop	Aleverage total score	standard deviation	t-value	p-value
pre-test	25	12.88	1.364	-7.242	less than 0.001
Post-test	25	15.40	1.080		

According to Table 5, the average total score of the experimental class in the pre-test was 12.88, and it increased to 15.40 in the post-test, with a t-value of -7. 242 and a p-value < 0. 001. This data clearly shows that the average total score of the experimental class in the post-test was significantly higher than that in the pre-test, indicating that the narrative ability of the children was improved through the intervention of painting activities.

Table 6 Comparison of Differences in Scores of Each Dimension of Narrative Ability before and after the Experiment in the Experimental Class

dimension	class	number of peop	erage value	standard deviation	t	p
Narrativecontent structure	pre-test	25	1.76	0.597	-3.246	0.002
	Post-test	25	2.24	0.436		
Length of event description	pre-test	25	1.60	0.500	-3.601	less than 0.001
	Post-test	25	2.04	0.351		
Relevance to the topic	pre-test	25	2.16	0.374	-3.893	less than 0.001
	Post-test	25	2.64	0.490		
The Application of Dialogue	pre-test	25	1.12	0.332	-2.642	0.011
	Post-test	25	1.44	0.507		
The Use of Time Markers	pre-test	25	1.56	0.507	-0.281	0.780
	Post-test	25	1.60	0.500		
Expressiveness	pre-test	25	2.00	0.000	-1.365	0.179
	Post-test	25	2.12	0.440		
Vocabulary level	pre-test	25	1.36	0.490	-0.849	0.400
	Post-test	25	1.48	0.510		
Narrative sentence structure	pre-test	25	1.32	0.476	-4.294	less than 0.001
	Post-test	25	1.84	0.374		

As shown in Table 6, in terms of the narrative content structure, the average score of the pre-test was 1.76, which rose to 2.24 in the post-test; the length of event narration increased from 1.60 to 2.04; the theme relevance also grew from 2. 16 to 2.64; the application of dialogue rose from 1. 12 to 1.44; and the narrative sentence structure improved from 1.32 to 1. 84. The P-values for all five dimensions were less than 0. 05, indicating that there were significant differences between the pre-test and post-test, verifying that drawing has different promoting effects on various dimensions of narrative language expression ability. However, the P-values for "the use of time markers",

"expressiveness", and "vocabulary level" were all greater than 0.05, suggesting that the differences between the pre-test and post-test were not significant. Nevertheless, it can be seen that there were differences in the average values, indicating that there was still improvement, although the impact was not prominent.

5.2 Comparison of pre- and post-test differences in the control class

This study conducted a detailed comparison of the pre- and post-test data of the narrative ability dimensions and the total scores of the 25 children in the control class. The data are presented in detail in Tables 7 and8.

Table 7 Comparison of the Total Scores of Narrative Ability before and after the Test in the Control Class

class	number of people	Aleverage total score	standard deviation	t-value p-value
Experimental class	25	12.76	1.234	-1.962 0.056
Control class	25	13.48	1.358	

Table 7 shows that the average total score of narrative ability in the control class was 12.76 before the test and 13.48 after the test, with a t-value of -1.962 and a p-value of 0.056 (>0.05). This indicates that the total score of narrative ability of the children in the control class also improved after a period of time, but the improvement was relatively small compared with the experimental class, and the difference was not significant.

Table 8 Comparison of Differences in Scores of Each Dimension of Narrative Ability before and after the Test in the Control Class

dimension	class	number of peop	erage value	standard deviation	t	p
Narrativecontent structure	pre-test Post-test	25 25	1.72 1.80	0.542 0.577	-0.505	0.616
Length of event description	pre-test Post-test	25 25	1.56 1.64	0.507 0.490	-0.568	0.573
Relevance to the topic	pre-test Post-test	25 25	2.16 2.20	0.374 0.408	-0.361	0.720
The Application of Dialogue	pre-test Post-test	25 25	1.12 1.20	0.332 0.408	-0.760	0.451
The Use of Time Markers	pre-test Post-test	25 25	1.52 1.56	0.510 0.507	-0.278	0.782
Expressiveness	pre-test Post-test	25 25	2.00 2.08	0.000 0.400	-1.000	0.322
Vocabulary level	pre-test Post-test	25 25	1.32 1.36	0.476 0.490	-0.293	0.771
Narrative sentence structure	pre-test Post-test	25 25	1.36 1.44	0.490 0.507	-0.568	0.573

As shown in Table 8, the P values of the eight dimensions are all greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no significant difference among the children in the control class. However, in terms of the average values, the performance of the control class in each dimension has improved, but the improvement is relatively smaller compared with that of the experimental class.

5.3 Post-test Difference Test between the Experimental Class and the Control Class

After four weeks of experimental intervention, the "Multicolored Spectrum Language Evaluation

Standard" was applied again. The participants were asked to narrate on the theme of "My Weekend", and the data were analyzed using SPSS 27. 0 statistical software. The detailed data are presented in Tables 9 and 10.

Table 9 Comparison of the Total Scores of Narrative Ability in the Experimental Class and the Control Class in the Post-test

Pre- and post-test	number of peop	Aleverage total score	standard deviation	t-value	p-value
Experimental class	25	15.40	1.080	5.533	less than
Control class	25	13.48	1.357		0.001

Table 9 presents the differences in the total narrative ability scores of the experimental class and the control class in the post-test. The average total score of the experimental class in the post-test was 15.40, while that of the control class was 13.48, with a t-value of 5.533 and a p- value < 0. 001. This clearly indicates that after the experimental intervention, the development level of narrative ability of the children in the experimental class showed a more significant improvement compared to that of the control class.

Table 10 Comparison of Differences in Scores of Each Dimension of Narrative Ability between the Experimental Class and the Control Class in the Post-test

dimension	class	number of peop	erage value	standard deviation	t	p
Narrativecontent structure	Experimental class	25	2.24	0.436	3.041	0.004
	Control class	25	1.86	0.577		
Length of event description	Experimental class	25	2.04	0.351	3.318	0.002
	Control class	25	2.64	0.490		
Relevance to the topic	Experimental class	25	2.64	0.490	3.450	0.001
	Control class	25	2.20	0.408		
The Application of Dialogue	Experimental class	25	1.44	0.057	1.844	0.071
	Control class	25	1.20	0.408		
The Use of Time Markers	Experimental class	25	1.60	0.500	0.281	0.780
	Control class	25	1.56	0.507		
Expressiveness	Experimental class	25	2.12	0.440	0.336	0.738
	Control class	25	2.08	0.400		
Vocabulary level	Experimental class	25	1.48	0.510	0.849	0.400
	Control class	25	1.36	0.490		
Narrative sentence structure	Experimental class	25	1.84	0.374	3.176	0.003
	Control class	25	1.44	0.507		

From Table10, it can be seen that the P values for the experimental class and the control class in terms of "narrative content structure", "length of event narration", "theme relevance", and "narrative sentence structure" are all less than 0.05. Although the P values for "use of dialogue", "use of time markers", "expressiveness", and "vocabulary level" are greater than 0.05, it can be observed from the average values that the average values of the experimental class have improved more significantly than those of the control class.

Therefore, the narrative ability of the children in the experimental class is significantly better than that of the children in the control class. The painting activity helps the children in the experimental class to organize the story plot more clearly, thus performing better in the completeness and logic of the narrative structure.

6. Analysis of Research Results

1) Comparison of the narrative ability levels of the experimental class and the control class

children in each dimension before the experiment

At the initial stage of this research, a pre-test of narrative proficiency was conducted on 25 children from each of the experimental and control classes. Through independent sample T-test data analysis, it was found that there were no significant differences in the overall narrative performance and the eight dimensions between the two classes of children. This indicates that under similar growth and educational backgrounds, the narrative development levels of the children in the two classes were similar, providing a common starting point for the subsequent experimental activities.

2) Comparison of the narrative ability levels of the experimental class and the control class in each dimension after the experiment

In the later stage of the experiment, the researchers re-assessed the narrative abilities of the children in the experimental class and the control class, with the theme "My Weekend", and scored them using the "Multicolored Spectrum Language Evaluation Standard". After four weeks of experimental intervention, the researchers used an independent sample T-test to compare the narrative abilities of the children in the two classes. The results showed that the children in the experimental class were significantly better than those in the control class in terms of "narrative content structure", "length of event description", "theme relevance", and "narrative sentence structure ". This indicates that the narrative abilities of the children in the experimental class improved significantly after the intervention of the drawing activity, while the children in the control class also made progress, but the improvement was not as significant as that of the experimental class. The experimental data reveal the positive impact of drawing activities on the narrative abilities of middle-class children, not only enhancing their narrative skills but also promoting their language development.

It enhanced the logicality of young children's narrative structure, and also improved their performance in story length, thematic relevance and sentence construction, thereby confirming the unique value of drawing as an effective educational intervention in promoting the development of children's narrative ability.

7. Conclusions

Through the statistical analysis of the pre- and post-experiment data, the results show that there is a common problem among young children of insufficient vocabulary and expressive ability. Vocabulary is the foundation of language development. The early vocabulary development process can directly reflect the process of meaning construction in children's psychological world and is also gradually formed during the process of vocabulary acquisition. In 2001, the Ministry of Education issued the "Guidelines for Kindergarten Education (Trial)", which pointed out that "The key to developing children's language is to create an environment where they want to speak, dare to speak, like to speak, have the opportunity to speak, and can receive positive responses" Children's vocabulary often affects their desire to express themselves. Some children may want to speak but cannot find the appropriate words to express their thoughts, which leads to incomplete narrative content structure during the narrative process. We should focus on cultivating children's spirit of exploration and cooperative awareness, which can increase the frequency of interaction and communication among peers and also promote the development of children's expressiveness. We can also increase emotional expression in daily teaching to make the narrative content vivid and lively, thereby promoting children's narrative development in a subtle way.

Parents, as the most important educational force in kindergartens, have a natural educational advantage. As long as parents and teachers work together towards a common goal, the educational effect will be multiplied. Teachers should guide parents to establish correct educational concepts and methods, and make them realize that they are not only caregivers but also educators. In daily

life, parents can increase interaction with their children, and in the process of interaction, pass on knowledge and enhance the parent-child relationship, enrich the children's language material accumulation, and promote the development of language expression. As teachers, we can hold parent open days or organize parent-child games and other home-kindergarten cooperation activities to explain to parents the important value of children's language ability development, and encourage them to consciously set an example for their children in the family upbringing environment and language expression environment. Teachers can also establish communication record books with parents, observe and record children's language performance through home-kindergarten cooperation. This not only helps to comprehensively understand each child's narrative level and implement targeted individual education, but also keeps the home and kindergarten educational environments consistent, thereby exerting a subtle influence on the development of children's narrative abilities.

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