

THEATRICAL ACTIVITY AS A MEANS OF FORMING SOFT SKILLS IN SENIOR PRESCHOOLERS

Lesia Hladun

Department of Pedagogy and Methods of Primary and Preschool Education
Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University
2 Maxyma Kryvonosa vul., 46027 Ternopil, Ukraine
E-mail address: lesia.hladun@tnpu.edu.ua
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-0980-8917>

Andriana Shyshak

Department of Educology and Pedagogy, West Ukrainian National University
11 Lvivska vul. (WUNU Building 1), 46009 Ternopil, Ukraine
E-mail address: a.shyshak@wunu.edu.ua
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7715-9528>

Rostyslav Rudenskyi

Department of Educology and Pedagogy
West Ukrainian National University
11 Lvivska vul. (WUNU Building 1), 46009 Ternopil, Ukraine
E-mail address: r.rudenskyi@wunu.edu.ua
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5890-6276>

Peter Tirpák

Department of Social Sciences and Humanities, Greek Catholic Faculty of Theology,
University of Prešov in Prešov
Ulica biskupa Gojdiča 2, 080 01 Prešov, Slovak Republic
E-mail address: Peter.tirpak@unipo.sk
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4740-817X>

Amantius Akimjak

Theological Institute in Spišské Podhradie
Catholic University in Ružomberok
Spišská Kapitula 12, 053 04 Spišské Podhradie, Slovak Republic
&
Priestly Seminar of Bishop Ján Vojtaššák
Catholic University in Ružomberok
Spišská Kapitula 12, 053 04 Spišské Podhradie, Slovak Republic
E-mail address: amantius.akimjak@gmail.com
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1295-3274>

Ahmad Moh'd Mansour

Department of Business, Business School, Al-Ahliyya Amman University
19111 Amman, Jordan

E-mail address: a.mansour@ammanu.edu.jo

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5849-4838>

ABSTRACT

Thesis. The purpose of the study is to clarify the essence of the concept of 'soft skills' and determine the types that should be formed in senior preschoolers; to explain emotional intelligence and adaptability as one of the soft skills of senior preschool children, to specify their content; to substantiate the essence of theatrical activity and types of theatre in preschool education; to explain the use of theatrical activity for the formation of soft skills, in particular emotional intelligence and adaptability, in senior preschoolers.

Concept. The relevance of the topic is related to the need for a personality of the XXI century to master a variety of soft skills, in particular emotional intelligence and adaptability. It is precisely in the preschool age when the foundations of these skills are formed, that theatrical activity has a significant potential for their development.

Result and conclusion. The research reflects different approaches to the interpretation of the concept of 'soft skills' and the classification of this phenomenon. It defines the content of the terms 'emotional intelligence' and 'adaptability' as soft skills of senior preschool children. It is characterised by theatrical activity in preschool education institutions as a means of forming emotional intelligence and adaptability in senior preschoolers. The conclusion of the study emphasises the effectiveness of the use of theatrical activity for the development of soft skills of pupils of the senior group of preschool education institutions and reflects the variety of forms of its manifestation.

Keywords: theatrical activity, senior preschooler, preschool education institution, soft skills, emotional intelligence, cognitive activity, adaptability

INTRODUCTION

Throughout life, a person acquires a certain set of knowledge and abilities. The point of reference for defining a set of key competences should be the world of the future and the newly developing labour market, which we are only able to define approximately (Kobylarek, Plavčan et al., 2021). The competence model, which is embedded in the concept of lifelong learning, includes communication competences, multi-lingual and multi-cultural competences, digital competences, entrepreneurship competences, openness to science and culture, social and civil competences (Kobylarek, Jakubowska et

al. 2021). In view of this and the need to anticipate future trends and be able to live in the new environment, people need to have soft skills.

Mastery of soft skills is essential for success of personality in the 21st century. It helps to unlock an individual's personal potential, self-realisation and self-development. Such skills are formed from childhood, and this process continues throughout a person's life. That is why the most important task of preschool education is to effectively promote the foundation of soft skills in various ways, including through theatrical activities. Theatrical activity is one of the most effective means of forming flexible skills in senior preschool children. It implements many tasks, comprehensively combines music, acting, visual, fine, literary and other arts, positively influencing the development of cognitive and sensory skills (memory, imagination, attention, thinking, speech, self-awareness, perception of colour, shape, properties of objects, etc, empathy, understanding the emotions of others and expressing one's own, interaction with peers and adults, responsibility, etc.), creativity and imagination skills, self-service, self-regulation, self-identification, time and space orientation, ethical and aesthetic norms and rules of behaviour, technological literacy skills, perception of art and culture of the native land, civic awareness, etc.

Soft Skills: The Essence and Types which Should be Formed in Senior Preschoolers

Soft skills are skills based on the ability of an individual to respond effectively to new challenges, to adapt quickly and skilfully to different circumstances, and to perform certain tasks in a productive and creative manner. In the 21st century, the concept of soft skills covers a wide range of skills and includes certain basic knowledge. We can define the concept of 'soft skills' as skills that play an important role in interacting with other people, including the ability to adapt to new situations, find non-standard solutions to problems, cooperate in a team, contributing to successful self-development and self-realisation of the individual, increasing competitiveness in the labour market. Indeed, there is a two-way relationship: soft skills are developed in the social environment and the social environment influences the development of soft skills. The quality of the social environment determines "values, that the child gradually learns and accepts as a part of their own mental world, value preferences and social interactions" (Králik & Máhrik, 2019, p. 8896). A person's understanding of life's orientations from childhood helps him or her understand the need to develop certain abilities that fully or partially correspond to soft skills. These skills are based on the social development goals 2015–2030, which "have a social dimension and are also oriented towards achieving a just world order, eradicating hunger and poverty, as well as institutional openness and security in the world" (Kondrla et al., 2024a, p. 80). This is promoted by education for sustainable development, which "aims to equip current and future generations of our planet Earth with the knowledge, skills and values

necessary to create a sustainable society” (Presi et al., 2024, p. 156). Many aspects of this education (including social education, which is important in the context of our study) should be introduced from preschool age. This process should take into account the need to provide preschoolers with sufficient «social attention» to comprehensively prepare them for life in the society of the future (Hamarová et al., 2024, p. 30).

Soft skills are classified by three types of qualities: managerial (time management, teamwork, training and motivation of team members, risk prevention); communication (interaction with different types of people, clear articulation, quality presentations, friendly communication, etc.) and individual qualities (optimism, positive thinking, goal setting and achievement, result orientation) (Koval, 2015).

“Soft skills” are also divided into the following groups: personal effectiveness (stress resistance, analytical thinking, creativity, ability to achieve goals, etc.), communication skills (ability to work in a group, persuade, negotiate, resolve conflict situations, etc.), management skills (ability to form a group, team, communication system, leadership, etc.) and strategic skills (ability to work in risky conditions, market, strategic planning and decision-making) (Dlunovych, 2014).

It is important to emphasise that all soft skills directly or indirectly involve the ability to communicate. Thus, its importance is significant. If communication skills are not developed, a person begins to lose them, and their ability to exchange ideas and coordinate solutions to problems that will inevitably arise is destroyed. On a global scale, this leads to the destruction of society and the entire ecosystem, as the link in ensuring the integrity of the social complex is lost (Králik et al., 2024).

“Man is an individual being in need of social bonds” (Adam & Trstenský, 2024, p. 64). That is why people live in a society that is based on values as a fundamental pillar of its development (Lesková & Yochanna, 2024). Therefore, all of the above skills should be based on these phenomena, in particular, on the value and dignity of the individual. This means personal improvement through the acquisition of various soft skills based on the understanding of the dignity of others and one’s own dignity in any activity (Bajan et al., 2023, p. 146). For example, the ability to achieve goals or persuade should not violate personal boundaries or destroy the values of others. On the contrary, the qualitative use of such and similar skills involves taking into account all opinions and, on their basis, making a balanced and most effective decision that will bring maximum benefit to all. In view of this, it is reasonable to conclude that the development and application of soft skills should be accompanied by an awareness of values. This should result in the formation of a system of virtues in the individual, which may be related to interpersonal relations (moral virtues), social behaviour (civic virtues), external character traits (productivity virtues) and internal character traits (intellectual virtues) (Guttesen, 2024).

Senior preschool age covers the period from 5 to 6 (7) years. It is characterised by the rapid development of speech, social skills, mental and cognitive abilities, and the child’s emotional sphere. This is the time when children develop skills

of self-control and regulation of their own behaviour. This age period is characterised by the formation of one's own self, emotional sensitivity, self-awareness, development of intuition, psychological processes and cognitive activity, which "is formed in various activities, enriched by them, complicated and moving from a lower to a higher level" (Rudenskyi, 2024, p. 220). With this in mind, older preschoolers learn to quickly perceive and process information. They are curious and energetic.

The period from 5 to 7 years is favourable for the development of two soft skills that are quite broad and closely related—emotional intelligence and adaptability. We describe them in more detail.

Emotional intelligence is understood as a form of revealing a person's positive attitude to the world (assessing it as one in which a person can carry out successful life), to others (as worthy of a benevolent attitude), to oneself (as able to independently determine the goals of one's own life and actively act towards their implementation; as worthy of self-respect) (Nosenko & Kovryha, 2003). The concept of emotional intelligence covers «perception, evaluation and expression of emotions; use of emotions to improve the efficiency of thinking and activity; understanding and analysis of emotions; conscious management of emotions» (Mayer et al., 2000). The components of emotional intelligence are self-awareness, self-control, social sensitivity, and relationship management (Goulman, 2018). This is especially important when creating positive and close relationships with other people as a result of an affiliation (Lesková et al., 2024).

Senior preschool age is characterised by the socialisation of emotional intelligence. At this time, the ability to empathise develops, although it is not yet fully stable. The child has the ability to show empathy and compassion, which ensures the development of interpersonal emotional intelligence (Shpak, 2016). This contributes to the accumulation of social capital (in particular, during family relationships), which helps individuals to maintain a high level of all health components (Hubková et al., 2024; Majda et al., 2024; Petrovič et al., 2024). Empathy can be improved by demonstrating compassion by paying attention, recognising the beliefs and values of the individual and openly interacting with them, showing the importance of their opinion for joint decision-making, etc (Janáčková et al., 2024). This soft skill can be the basis of a person's spirituality, as it helps to develop a deep connection with other people, nature and the world in general (Kondrla et al., 2024b).

Adaptability is the natural development of a person's adaptive capabilities in different conditions of the environment (in general or, for example, in a preschool education institution, group, on holiday, etc.) (Solovei, 2022). In essence, adaptability is the ability to adapt, which is divided into psychological, social and biological (Zakharova, 2010).

Biological adaptation is the restructuring of the body's physiological systems, its adaptation to new living conditions, which occurs on the basis of innate mechanisms (Kachan, 2019). Being in a previously unknown environment, older preschoolers have to get used to its physical conditions (e.g., sounds, smells, temperature, lighting, etc.) and the changes in their own bodies that these new conditions cause.

The essence of psychological adaptation is the child's psychological adaptation to the changed environmental conditions and the development of a behavioural model adequate to the new conditions (Bursova & Karapuzova, 2017). The development of psychological adaptability skills helps to ensure that a child does not experience internal discomfort, psychological tension, or anxiety. They feel at ease, open, active, and ready to learn new things.

The term "social adaptation" is a comprehensive indicator of a person's condition, reflecting the ability to perform certain biological and social functions, namely: equivalent awareness of the surrounding reality; equivalent relationships with other people; ability to work, study, organise leisure and recreation; stability of behaviour that meets the role expectations of others (Solovei, 2022). The use of improvisation helps to overcome the human desire to repeat as a result of the fear of doing something different, to feel free, in particular through expression in art (Pavlíková & Tavilla, 2023).

Thus, the adaptability of the senior preschooler is the ability to make psychological, social and biological adaptation relatively quickly.

The Essence of Theatrical Activity and Types of Theatre in Preschool Education

Theatrical activity is an artistic activity associated with the perception of works of theatre art and the reproduction of acquired ideas, impressions, and feelings playfully. It is one of the most effective means of pedagogical influence on the development of a child's personality (Oliinyk, 2017b).

Theatrical activity contributes to the education of a fully developed personality; it is a means of forming the artistic and creative abilities of the preschooler. Using theatrical activity, children aged 5–7 years intensively develop cognitive interests, improve mental processes (memory, imagination, thinking), activate speech, form a culture of interpersonal communication, and enrich their world-view (Pokhyl, 2017). The use of elements of theatrical activity based on the principle of free will allows the educator to form a system of knowledge and skills necessary for life in the preschooler gradually and imperceptibly for the child.

Theatrical activity of preschoolers is considered as an important means of developing children's cognitive interest, ability to recognise the emotional state of a person through speech, facial expressions, gestures, intonations, to analyse and evaluate the actions of others, and the ability to put oneself in the place of another person (Kydyk, 2017); as an activity that is a synthesis of the perception of a literary text and its creative reflection in roles playfully on the basis of acquired ideas, impressions, feelings (Nechyporuk, 2019). Along with other types of art (e.g. visual arts), involving children in theatre activities allows for artistic expression, which helps to express children's

thoughts on a particular issue, their emotions and feelings, even in the most difficult times (war or the Covid-19 pandemic) (Pavlíková et al., 2023).

Based on a review of a number of academic sources, we can interpret the concept of theatrical activity as a type of artistic and creative activity that ensures the comprehensive and harmonious development of the individual, his or her socialisation and adaptation in the environment through the perception, preparation and staging of theatrical performances using various means of theatre.

In the senior preschool age it is advisable to acquaint children with different types of theatre, their features, common and distinctive features, to form children's love for and interest in theatre. This is facilitated by the use of different types of theatre in the life of the group in the preschool education institution. Let us consider some of them.

Puppet theatre is a specific type of performance in which puppets act. A theatre puppet is a plastic generalisation of a living being—a person or an animal (Liubchak, 2018). Children's puppet theatre includes the theatre of top (riding) puppets, puppet theatre (theatre of bottom puppets), theatre of middle puppets, theatre of knee puppets, leg-players, synthesised puppet theatre (Breus, 2022). In such productions, the older preschooler can play the role of a spectator, scriptwriter or actor.

A doll is a substitute for a person. By creating a doll or playing roles with it, a child brings it to life and gives it certain characteristics. It becomes the best friend of the older preschooler, with whom he or she not only plays, but also communicates, shares his or her own thoughts and impressions, and takes care of it. Often, a child is not afraid to be alone at home when there is a favourite doll nearby (Fedii, 2009). Through theatrical performances with puppets, older preschoolers get to know the world better, learn moral and aesthetic norms and rules of behaviour, learn to interact, and experience different feelings and emotions. After puppet shows, children feel relief, satisfaction, joy, and delight.

Object theatre involves giving various items the role of the main characters in a performance. Their movements, voice and behaviour are controlled by the performers. When as a theatre of objects, it is important to take into account the peculiarities of a particular object, the possibilities and conditions for manipulating it. An object can reflect certain characteristics, such as nationality or age. It should also be borne in mind that different features of an object are important: softness or hardness, warmth or coldness, durability or fragility, artificial or natural, etc.

An interesting type of non-standard theatre is sand theatre. In this case, the sand is scattered on a table or floor, and older preschoolers use their fingers to create different images or scenes with or without a light background. Its analogue is the semolina theatre: here the main characters are puppets or mannequins, and the actions take place on the spilled cereal.

Water theatre is no less fascinating. The main element of the performance is ordinary water, which often serves as a stage. Water theatrical performances are mostly accompanied by music and visual effects.

Close to the previous one is the droplet theatre. This type of theatre is realised by using water droplets to create temporary patterns on a flat surface.

When using shadow theatre in preschool education, actors use movements, shapes, body gestures and other objects to create shadows on a screen or wall using light. In this way, children create images of different characters and try to convey certain stories or situations with their performances. The use of this theatre develops children's imagination and fantasy, the ability to improvise, curiosity, speech, motor skills, coordination of body movements, etc.

Pantomime theatre is used in work with older preschoolers, in which the image is conveyed through facial expressions, gestures, and body plasticity. Thus, children learn to express themselves, recognise other people's emotions, successfully express their own, understand each other without words, develop empathy, attention, etc.

Another fascinating form of theatrical activity is mask theatre. It is based on a theatrical mask—a product with slits for the eyes and used by actors to indicate the main characters and their emotions. These can be both people and characters of animals, mythical or fictional creatures. Older preschool children can make their own masks with the help of adults for performances. This brings them joy, a lot of positive emotions, develops creativity, self-organisation, positive interaction with adults and peers.

Children's fashion theatre encompasses stage and design art. Its use promotes self-expression, confidence development, and an introduction to the history of fashion, past and present fashion world. Older preschoolers, with the help of their parents and educators, can create a collection of clothes to showcase on the catwalk or use factory clothes to convey images.

Musical theatre for senior preschoolers combines music, singing, dancing and dialogue, creates a special positive atmosphere in the children's group and among the audience, and vividly emphasises the emotions and plot of the production. That is why it is a favourite type of theatre among children and adults. Musical theatre includes performances of musicals and musical comedies, as well as ballet, opera, operetta, etc.

Children's dance theatre involves children using small choreographed costume performances to convey ideas, emotions and plots of works of art. Pupils of the older group of preschool education institutions are happy to act out the plot of their favourite fairy tales as a series of dance performances. By participating in this type of theatre, senior preschoolers learn to coordinate their movements, express feelings and emotions through body plasticity, and be creative by creating their own movements or dance scenes.

Children's improvisation theatre is a theatre based on the imagination and imagination of preschoolers. Its essence lies in creating an artistic image in the process of a theatrical game without prior preparation of the actor and the script of the performance. This type of theatre often involves interaction with the audience, various games, logical and creative tasks, fantastic sketches, and fictional stories about fantastic characters.

The emphasis in improvisational theatre is on the spontaneous creation of scenes and dialogues; preliminary planning is only partially possible.

These and other types of theatre used in preschool education institutions have a significant potential for developing soft skills in preschoolers, including their emotional intelligence and adaptability.

The Using of Theatrical Activity for the Senior Preschoolers Soft Skills' Formation

Theatrical activities of older preschoolers contribute significantly to the development of emotional intelligence skills. 5–6-year-olds express their emotions in theatre performances. Through role-playing, children learn to understand the positive and negative emotions of fairy-tale characters, to rejoice or sympathise with them, which contributes to the active development of empathy.

The theatrical activity of senior preschoolers is a systematic process. It includes familiarisation with the literary basis of the future performance, preparation of children for perception, detailed analysis of the plot and actions of the characters, discussion of strategies of their behaviour, testing oneself in a certain role, comprehension and learning of the role, independent embodiment of the character and the idea of the performance. A clear step-by-step process of theatrical activity allows developing empathy in older preschoolers (Oliinyk, 2017a).

The art of theatre is aimed at developing a child's empathy with the characters; readiness for reflection (personal assessments of the performance, the actions of the characters, their own impressions and emotions); the ability to use the acquired behavioural experience and express their own emotions in their own lives (Polovina, 2021). Theatre art allows a person to know themselves as an individual, to discover their own talents and capabilities, to skilfully demonstrate their thoughts and feelings, to control personal desires; it promotes creative expression, understanding of their uniqueness and originality, and difference from other members of the group. This leads to the formation of self-awareness.

The senior preschooler draws an analogy of a theatrical performance with life, is able to reflect emotions, impressions and own feelings with the help of facial expressions, gestures, voice intonation, movements. He/she creates artistic images, is guided in the use of techniques of artistic and productive and decorative activities, has a culture of the audience, memorises the sequence of performances, shows acting skills, is guided by ethical norms and rules, demonstrates independent artistic activity, cooperates with children and adults, helps to decorate the room, shows aesthetic taste and skills of reflection on artistic experience (Ministerstvo osvity i nauky Ukrainy, 2021).

Older preschoolers need to realise that positive and negative emotions have a significant impact on people's lives. They are reflected in our decisions, mood, physical and mental health, perception of the world around us, etc. This is what should

be formed in pupils of preschool educational institutions through the use of acting through stage language and dialogues of actors, make-up, costumes, changes in voice, facial expressions, gestures. This is facilitated by attending theatre performances, acting out mono-performances, role-playing games. For example, the educator can try to play a certain role, changing the voice, facial expressions and gestures accordingly. It is also often advisable to involve parents, schoolchildren, and preschool staff in the theatre game, so that they can perform a mini-play for preschoolers. When organising any activity for children, special attention should be paid to their awareness of the purpose of the activity and the formulation of conclusions. This is due to the fact that older preschoolers, like younger students, are often fascinated by the process of interaction rather than the content and purpose of the activity (Shyshak et al., 2024). After conducting such events, you should collectively discuss what you saw, share your impressions of the game, explain the emotions of the actors, the positive and negative aspects of the roles, and draw conclusions about the impact of human emotions and feelings on communication and relationships (Pysarchuk & Hladun, 2023). Therefore, it is important to learn to recognise one's own emotions and feelings and to manage them adequately.

The teacher should determine which emotions are already known to the older preschooler, as well as those that still need to be introduced to them or the content of which should be clarified; teach them to understand the feelings and emotions of others through gestures and mimicry. For example, using facial expressions, theatrical face or head masks, emoticons, doll masks, it is necessary to demonstrate basic emotions (joy, surprise, sadness, anger, disgust, fear) to children, divide them into positive and negative, and discuss the specifics of their expression. For better mastering of emotions and developing the ability to distinguish them, it is necessary to use music (major and minor melodies), visual arts (depiction of emotions in drawings using black and white tones or colours), thematic decorations (stage design, theatre centre in preschool education institution, etc.), movement and choreography (conveying emotions through body language and gestures), light effects (playing with light and shadows) when demonstrating emotional states of a person. Computer technology can also be used to accompany theatrical productions (Pysarchuk et al., 2024).

To learn how to demonstrate your own emotions and feelings correctly, it is advisable to use theatrical games and exercises (for example, games: "Magic Chest", "Identify an Emotion", "Visiting a Clown", "Compass of Emotions"; exercises: "Feelings and emotions of the heroes", "Musical telephone", "Spoilt TV") (Tkachuk, 2021). Often, such theatrical activities reflect the same plot as, for example, board games. However, board games do not contain dramatic events and motifs, while theatre games and exercises do (Rudenskyi et al., 2024). Role-playing games should be used in the form of theatrical performances, imitation games, dramatisation of children's fiction, musical or festive performances, theatrical miniatures and monologues, multi-genre mini-performances, mini-musicals, etc. (Pysarchuk & Hladun, 2023). Demon-

strating emotions and feelings both during theatrical activities and in everyday life helps children to gain experience in using emotional intelligence.

The adaptability of older preschoolers should also be formed through the implementation of theatrical activities. In preschool education institutions, theatrical improvisations related to musical or dance theatre, in particular through the use of music of different genres, tempo or nature, contribute significantly to this. For example, you can ask older preschool children to recreate the dance of trees to music that represents different seasons (winter, spring, summer and autumn). The change in the emotional state of the tree characters under the influence of music as a result of switching the melody creates the possibility of developing rapid adaptation to environmental conditions that are often transformed in everyday life.

The ability to implement a behavioural model adequate to the situation is ensured through role-playing as a type of theatrical play in preschool education. The actions performed by children may correspond to a particular work of fiction that preschoolers have studied during the educational process, or to a story from children's real life (Pidlypniak, 2022). Providing older preschoolers with objects that reflect a particular theme or area does not determine a specific course of action. The children themselves decide what to do with these objects and how to do it, i.e. they adapt their own actions to the proposed plot, which teaches them to model their own behaviour in different situations. An example of such an activity is the theatre of fashion, objects or sand.

The formation of adaptability to the diversity of society is facilitated by participation in collective theatre performances, including a theatrical flash mob (a performance on the street or in unusual places), a theatrical masquerade (an entertainment ball in masks), holiday theatre (a performance dedicated to the theme of a particular holiday), theatrical festivals, contests, quizzes, competitions etc. (Pysarchuk & Hladun, 2023). Interacting with peers or adults, a senior preschooler learns to find a common language with others, listen to the ideas of others, and identify steps to achieve a certain goal. This is especially facilitated by the organisation of drama theatre groups. In this case, the purpose of interaction can be to create a script or bring it to life during rehearsals, practice expressive speech or demonstrate it in front of an audience.

Adaptability is formed only as a result of interaction with other people, objects or changing environmental conditions. Through interaction with various puppets or toys, older preschoolers learn the rules and ways of interacting with others, become aware of their rights and responsibilities, and their place in society. So, children can perform tasks related to theatrical activities, working in groups, pairs and collectively. Group or teamwork helps to develop the ability to discuss, cooperate, negotiate, defend one's own position and respect the opinions of others, and thus be prepared for this in the future in everyday life (Pysarchuk & Hladun, 2022). Such processes can be reflected either by preschoolers themselves, performing roles in masks, or by dolls or other objects controlled by performers.

During a theatre performance, children present themselves, practice social behaviour, and try to overcome their anxiety. In this way, they assert themselves and become confident. And if something goes wrong during the performance (for example, the actors forget the words or the scenery is damaged), older preschoolers learn to react quickly to new circumstances, maintaining confidence and calm. When children act in public in theatre productions, they gradually overcome their fear, if any, which also increases their adaptability as one of the soft skills.

CONCLUSION

Thus, theatrical activity is a type of artistic and creative activity that ensures the comprehensive and harmonious development of the individual, his/her socialisation and adaptation in the environment through the perception, preparation and performance of theatrical performances using various means of theatre. Different types of theatre are used in preschool education institutions: puppet theatre, object theatre, sand theatre, semolina theatre, water theatre, droplet theatre, shadow theatre, pantomime theatre, mask theatre, fashion theatre, musical theatre, dance theatre, improvisation theatre, etc. In such productions, the older preschooler can play the role of a spectator, scriptwriter or actor. The use of theatrical activity in preschool education contributes to the formation of soft skills in children, which are understood as skills that play an important role in interacting with other people, include the ability to adapt to new situations, find non-standard solutions to problems, cooperate in a team, contributing to successful self-development and self-realisation of the individual, increasing competitiveness in the labour market.

Among the soft skills that should be developed in older preschoolers, we identify emotional intelligence and adaptability.

Emotional intelligence is a form of revealing a person's positive attitude to the world (assessing it as one in which a person can live successfully), to others (as worthy of a benevolent attitude), to oneself (as able to independently determine the goals of one's own life and actively act towards their achievement; as worthy of self-respect). To develop this skill in older preschoolers, it is advisable to use the art of theatre (familiarisation with the literary basis of the play, detailed analysis of the plot and actions of the characters, comprehension and learning of the role, independent embodiment of the character and the idea of the play, performance of theatrical games and exercises, etc.), as it allows children to adequately express their emotions, classify them into positive and negative, understand emotions and feelings of other people demonstrated through facial expressions and gestures, voice, movements, etc.

Adaptability is the natural development of an individual's adaptive capacities in different conditions of his/her environment (in general or, for example, in a preschool institution, group, on holiday, etc.). The formation of a certain skill in older preschoolers is facilitated by the use of theatrical activities, in particular theatrical improvisations

related to music or dance theatre, role-playing games, collective theatrical productions (theatrical flashmob, theatrical masquerade, theatre for holidays, theatrical festivals, contests, quizzes, competitions, olympiads), etc.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The paper is a part of the project KEGA 025PU-4/2023: Innovation of the study programme Animation of Leisure Activities with Emphasis on Connection with Practice, and the EU NextGenerationEU through the Recovery and Resilience Plan for Slovakia under the project: Contemporary worship theology in relation to narcissistic culture, No. 09I03-03-V04-00654.

REFERENCES

- Adam, A., & Trstenský, F. (2024). Missions in an anthropological context. *Acta Missiologica*, 18(2), 53–67. https://www.actamissiologica.com/sub/am_2_2024.pdf
- Bajan, D., Pavera, L., Judák, V., Lojan, R., & Mrosová, L. (2023). Developing moral competencies in the training of social workers. *Acta Missiologica*, 17(1), 144–150. https://www.actamissiologica.com/sub/am1_2023.pdf
- Breus, N. Ye. (2022). Netradytsiini vydy teatru yak zasib rozvytku tvorchykh zdibnostei ta samovyrazhennia ditei doskilnoho viku u teatralno-ihrovii diialnosti [Non-traditional types of theatre as a means of developing creative abilities and self-expression of preschool children in theatre and play activities]. *Doshkilna osvita: problemy, poshuky, innovatsii : zbirnyk naukovykh i navchalno-metodychnykh prats*, 10, 28–33.
- Bursova, S. S., & Karapuzova, I. V. (2017). Psykholohichni suprovid ditei v period adaptatsii do DNZ [Psychological support for children during the period of adaptation to preschool education]. *Pedahohichna osvita: teoriia i praktyka : zbirnyk naukovykh prats*, 22(1–2017), 57–62.
- Dluhunovych, N. A. (2014). Soft skills yak neobkhidna skladova pidhotovky IT-fakhivtsiv [Soft skills as a necessary component of IT specialists' training]. *Visnyk Khmelnytskoho natsionalnoho universytetu*, 6(219), 239–242.
- Fedii, O. A. (2009). Lialkoterapiia u profesiinii diialnosti pedahoha [Puppet therapy in the professional activity of a teacher]. *Postmetodyka*, 1(85), 46–50.
- Goulman, D. (2018). *Emotsiyni intelekt: per. z anhl. S.-L. Humenetskoi* [Emotional intelligence (S. L. Humenetska, Trans.). Vivat. (Original work published 2006)]
- Guttesen, K. (2024). Freedom, creativity, time and wonderment in poetry education. *Acta Missiologica*, 18(2), 8–28. https://www.actamissiologica.com/sub/am_2_2024.pdf
- Hamarová, M., Maturkanič, P., Gruber, J., Svoboda, M., Šuráb, M., Hišem, C., & Králik, R. (2024). Social (pastoral) services and its impact on the citizens of the Czech Republic. *Clinical Social Work and Health Intervention*, 15(4), 25–33. https://doi.org/10.22359/cswhi_15_4_04
- Hubková, S., Jarmoch, E., Weiss, E., & Pařa, G. (2024). Social work foundations in mental health care – quantitative research. *Clinical Social Work and Health Intervention*, 15(6), 9–27. https://doi.org/10.22359/cswhi_15_6_02
- Janáčková, L., Fialová, J., Tyrol, A., Kováč, E., & Pavliková, M. (2024). Support options for seniors in hospitals. *Acta Missiologica*, 18(2), 116–127. https://www.actamissiologica.com/sub/am_2_2024.pdf
- Kachan, O. O. (2019). Sotsialna adaptatsiia ditei molodshoho doskilnoho viku do umov zakladu doskilnoi osvity [Social adaptation of young preschool children to the conditions of preschool education institution]. In O. V. Lisovets (Ed.), *Studentskyi naukovyi vymir sotsialno-pedahohichnykh problem sohodemia: zbirnyk materialiv III Mizhnarodnoi naukovo-praktychnoi konferentsii* [Student scientific world of socio-pedagogical problems of reconciliation: Collection of materials of the III International Scientific and Practical Conference] (pp. 208–210). NDU im. M. Hoholia. http://www.ndu.edu.ua/storage/2019/zbinnik_materialiv_14.05.19.pdf#page=209

- Kobylarek, A., Jakubowska, L., Błaszczyński, K., Govindin, N., Sciamia, P., Jesus, A., Amaral, C., Yosef, S., & Fiorillo, A. (2021). *Needs of adults education stakeholders. Research study/report*. Foundation Pro Scientia Publica. <https://doi.org/10.15503/andr.2021.neon.en>
- Kobylarek, A., Plavčan, P., & Amini Golestani, T. (2021). Educational priorities in a post pandemic world. *Journal of Education Culture and Society*, 12(2), 5–11. <https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs2021.2.5.11>
- Kondrla, P., Đurková, E., & Trstenský, F. (2024a). Selected aspects in the perception of sustainability values among religious education teaching students. *Journal of Education Culture and Society*, 15(1), 73–84. <https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs2024.1.73.84>
- Kondrla, P., Makan, F. Králik, R., & Guttesen, K. (2024b). The role of spiritual values in social work – the context of sustainability. *Clinical Social Work and Health Intervention*, 15(6), 120–129. https://doi.org/10.22359/cswghi_15_6_10
- Koval, K. O. (2015). Rozvytok “Soft skills” u studentiv – ody z vazhlyvykh chynnykiv pratsevashtuvannia [Developing soft skills in students is one of the most important factors for employment]. *Visnyk Vinnytskoho politekhnichnoho instytutu*, 2, 162–167.
- Králik, R., & Máhrík, T. (2019). Interpersonal relationship as the basis of student moral formation. *Paper presented at the ICERI 2019 Proceedings: 12th Annual International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation*, 6(4), 8896–8900. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21125/iceri.2019.2129>
- Králik, R., Máhrík, T., Spuchliak, J., Maturkanič, P., & Pavliková, M. (2024). Narcissistic privacy as a barrier to socialization. *Clinical Social Work and Health Intervention*, 15(4), 44–52. http://dx.doi.org/10.22359/cswghi_15_4_06
- Kydyk, O. (2017). Teatralizatsiia yak zasib rozvytku piznavalnykh interesiv doshkilnykiv [Theatre as a means of developing cognitive interests of preschool children]. *Aktualni problemy doshkilnoi ta pochatkovoi osvity v konteksti suchasnykh osvitykh paradym: zbirnyk materialiv naukovo-praktychnoi konferentsii vykladachiv i studentiv fakultetu doshkilnoi, pochatkovoi osvity ta mystetstv (Vinnytsia, VDPU im. M. Kotsiubynskoho, 5–6 kvitnia 2017 r.)*, 6, 314–317.
- Lesková, A. Máhrík, T., & Janiga, M. (2024). Attachment in personality: Contemporary challenges. *Clinical Social Work and Health Intervention*, 15(6), 28–37. https://doi.org/10.22359/cswghi_15_6_03
- Lesková, A., & Yochanna, M. (2024). Values and education for values of today’s youth. *Journal of Education Culture and Society*, 15(2), 35–42. <https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs2024.2.19.33>
- Liubchak, L. V. (2018). Pidhotovka maibutnykh vykhovateliv do orhanizatsii teatralizovanoi diialnosti ditei doshkilnoho viku [Preparing future educators to organise theatrical activities for preschool children]. *Osvitnii dyskurs: zbirnyk naukovykh prats*, 9 (11–12), 91–103.
- Majda, M., Gažiová, M., Šuchter, J., Petro, M., & Pavliková, M. (2024). Psychological and social dimensions of caring for injured children in professional families. *Clinical Social Work and Health Intervention*, 15(6), 38–53. https://doi.org/10.22359/cswghi_15_6_04
- Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., Caruso, D. R. (2000). Models of Emotional Intelligence. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Handbook of Intelligence* (pp. 396–420). Cambridge University Press.
- Ministerstvo osvity i nauky Ukrainy. (2021, January). Basic component of preschool education in Ukraine (state standard of preschool education) [Bazovyi komponent doshkilnoi osvity v Ukraini (Derzhavnyi standart doshkilnoi osvity)]. https://mon.gov.ua/storage/app/media/rizne/2021/12.01/Pro_novu_redaktsiyu%20Bazovoho%20komponenta%20doshkilnoyi%20osvity.pdf
- Nechyporuk, N. I. (2019). Formuvannia khudozhno-produktyvnoi kompetentsii ditei zasobamy teatralizovanoi diialnosti [Formation of artistic and productive competence of children through theatrical activities]. *Informatsiino-metodychnyi zbirnyk: spetsializovane pedahohichne vydannia departamentu osvity i nauky Kyivskoi oblasnoi derzhavnoi administratsii ta Komunalnoho navchalnoho zakladu Kyivskoi oblasnoi rady «Kyivskiy oblasnyi instytut pisliadyplomnoi osvity pedahohichnykh kadriv»*, 4(222), 21–35.
- Nosenko, E. L., & Kovryha, N. V. (2003). *Emotsiinyi intelekt: kontseptualizatsiia fenomenu, osnovni funktsii: Monohrafiia* [Emotional intelligence: conceptualisation of the phenomenon, main functions: A monograph]. Kyiv.
- Oliinyk, O. M. (2017a). Rozvytok empatii ditei starshoho doshkilnoho viku v protsesi teatralizovanoi diialnosti [Development of empathy of senior preschool children in the process of theatrical activity]. *Doshkilna osvita u suchasnomu sotsiokulturnomu prostori: Zbirnyk naukovykh prats*, 1, 59–65.
- Oliinyk, O. M. (2017b). *Teatralno-ihrova diialnist v umovakh doshkilnoho navchalnoho zakladu: navchalno-metodychnyi posibnyk* [Theatre and game activities in preschool educational institutions: a teaching aid]. Kamianets-Podilskyi.

- Pavliková, M., & Tavilla, I. (2023). Repetition as a path to authentic existence in Kierkegaard's work. *Journal of Education Culture and Society*, 14(2), 105–115. <https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs2023.2.105.115>
- Pavliková, M., Maturkanič, P., Akimjak, A., Mazur, S., & Timor, T. (2023). Social interventions in the family in the post-Covid pandemic period. *Journal of Education Culture and Society*, 14(1), 106–123. <https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs2023.1.106.123>
- Petrovič, F., Guttesen, K., Murgaš, F., & Králik, R. (2024). The impact of anxiety and depression on the quality of life of the university students: The Slovak experience. *Clinical Social Work and Health Intervention*, 15(6), 54–74. https://doi.org/10.22359/cswhi_15_6_05
- Pidlypniak, I. (2022). Teatralizovana diálnist yak zasib rozvytku tvorchoi osobystosti ditei doshkilnoho viku [Theatrical activity as a means of developing the creative personality of preschool children]. *Acta Paedagogica Volyniensis*, 4, 29–35. <https://doi.org/10.32782/apv/2022.4.5>
- Pokhyi, O. (2017). Osoblyvosti teatralizovanoi diálnosti starshykh doshkilnykiv [Features of theatrical activity of senior preschoolers]. *Zbirnyk naukovykh statei studentiv spetsialnosti «Doshkilna osvita»*, 5(2), 143–147.
- Polovina, O. A. (2021). Dytna u sviti mystetstva [A child in the world of art]. *Doshkilne vykhovannia*, 2, 3–8.
- Presi, O., Dervishaj, A., & La Ragione, C. (2024). Perspectives of a Sustainable Intercultural and Inclusive Education to Shape Life-Changers of Tomorrow. *Journal of Education Culture and Society*, 15(2), 153–168. <https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs2024.2.153.168>
- Pysarchuk, O. T., Hladun, L. V. (2022). Teatralizovana diálnist yak zasib sotsializatsii ditei starshoho doshkilnoho viku [Theatrical activity as a means of socialisation of senior preschool children]. In O. L. Kononko (Ed.), *Suchasna doshkilna osvita: aktualni problemy, innovatsiini poshuky: Zbirnyk statei IKh Vseukrainskoi naukovo-praktychnoi konferentsii* [Modern preschool education: current problems, innovative research: Proceedings of the I All-Ukrainian Scientific-Practical Conference] (pp. 124–128). NDU im. M. Hoholia. <http://dspace.tnpu.edu.ua/handle/123456789/28322>
- Pysarchuk, O. T., Hladun, L. V. (2023). Humorystychna teatralizovana diálnist yak zasib formuvannia soft skills v doshkilnii ta pochatkovii osviti [Humorous theatrical activity as a means of forming soft skills in preschool and primary education]. *Naukovyi visnyk Uzhhorodskoho universytetu. Serii: «Pedahohika. Sotsialna robota»*, 1(52), 141–147.
- Pysarchuk, O., Chykurova, O., Chaika, V., Surin, S., Francisti, J., & Kardis, K. (2024). Using Humor in didactic Materials for elementary School: Possibilities of Computer Technologies. *Clinical Social Work and Health Intervention*, 15(6), 75–86. https://doi.org/10.22359/cswhi_15_6_06
- Rudenskyi, R. (2024). Piznavalna aktyvnist starshykh doshkilnykiv: sutnist struktura, vikovi osoblyvosti [Cognitive Activity of Senior Preschoolers: Essence, Structure, Age Peculiarities]. *Visnyk Hlukhivskoho natsionalnoho pedahohichnoho universytetu imeni Oleksandra Dovzhenka*, 1(54), 214–222.
- Rudenskyi, R., Pysarchuk, O., Shcherbiak, I., Akimjaková, B., & Minarovicova, K. (2024). Humorous Potential of Board Games for Children of Senior Preschool Age. *Journal of Education Culture and Society*, 15(2), 267–285. <https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs2024.2.267.285>
- Shpak, M. M. (2016). Stanovlennia emotsiinnoho intelektu v doshkilnomu vitsi yak peredumova yoho rozvytku v molodshoho shkoliara [Formation of emotional intelligence in preschool age as a prerequisite for its development in primary school children]. *Naukovi zapysky Natsionalnoho universytetu «Ostrozka akademiia»*. Serii: *Psykhologhiia*, 4, 196–205.
- Shyshak, A., Chaika, V., Shcherbiak, I., Gažiová, M., & Tvrdon, M. (2024). Forming the Ability of Younger Students to Behave Safely on the Internet. *Journal of Education Culture and Society*, 15(1), 333–347. <https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs2024.1.333.347>
- Solovei, Y. O. (2022). Sotsialna adaptatsiia ditei doshkilnoho viku v umovakh zakladu doshkilnoi osvity [Social adaptation of preschool children in the conditions of preschool education institution]. *Naukovyi visnyk Uzhhorodskoho natsionalnoho universytetu: Serii: Pedahohika. Sotsialna robota*, 1(50), 260–263.
- Tkachuk, Y. V. (2021). Kontseptualni pidkhody do vyznachennia poniattia «sotsialni navychky» [Conceptual approaches to the definition of 'social skills']. *Nauka. Osvita. Molod: materialy XIV Vseukrainskoi naukovo konferentsii studentiv ta molodykh naukovtsiv (Uman, 28 kvitnia 2021 r.)*, 2, 181–184.
- Zakharova, N. M. (2010). *Adaptatsiia ditei doshkilnoho viku do suchasnoho sotsialnoho prostoru: Monohrafiia* [Adaptation of preschool children to the modern social space: A monograph]. Noulidzh.