

their metacognitive regulation, and develops essential democratic dispositions such as tolerance, empathy, and open-mindedness. These findings are consistent with international studies emphasizing the transformative power of reflection in civic and political education. Importantly, reflection serves not only as a pedagogical technique but as a developmental process that supports the formation of political identity, ethical responsibility, and the capacity for critical evaluation in the context of complex sociopolitical realities.

Furthermore, the study confirms that digital technologies play an increasingly significant role in expanding opportunities for reflective political learning. Learning management systems, e-portfolios, online discussion platforms, and AI-driven analytic tools provide students with personalized feedback, support sustained self-regulation, and encourage deeper forms of political reasoning. The integration of such technologies allows educators to design structured and meaningful reflective environments that enable students to reassess their political positions, track their progress, and refine their civic understanding. Future research should focus on the development of adaptive and AI-enhanced reflective environments, cross-cultural studies of reflective political learning, and empirical evaluation of long-term impacts of reflective practices on students' democratic engagement.

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### THE ROLE OF REFLECTION IN PATRIOTIC EDUCATION OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

The article examines the pedagogical role of reflection in the patriotic education of preschool children. Reflection is analyzed as a mechanism for developing self-awareness, emotional responsiveness, and value-based attitudes toward one's homeland, culture, and community. The author emphasizes that reflective practices – adapted to the developmental characteristics of early childhood – enhance the child's moral and civic consciousness, support emotional identification with national symbols, and foster pride in cultural heritage. The study defines pedagogical conditions and methods for integrating reflection into preschool education through storytelling, play, artistic activity, and dialogic communication.

Keywords: reflection, patriotic education, preschool children, moral development, self-awareness, emotional value formation, early childhood education.

## РОЛЬ РЕФЛЕКСИИ В ПАТРИОТИЧЕСКОМ ВОСПИТАНИИ ДЕТЕЙ ДОШКОЛЬНОГО ВОЗРАСТА

В статье рассматривается педагогическая роль рефлексии в патриотическом воспитании детей дошкольного возраста. Рефлексия рассматривается как механизм развития самосознания, эмоциональной отзывчивости и ценностного отношения к своей Родине, культуре и обществу. Автор подчеркивает, что рефлексивные практики, адаптированные к особенностям раннего детства, способствуют развитию нравственного и гражданского самосознания ребенка, способствуют эмоциональной идентификации с национальными символами и формированию чувства гордости за свое культурное наследие. В исследовании определяются педагогические условия и методы интеграции рефлексии в дошкольное образование через рассказ, игру, художественную деятельность и диалогическое общение.

Ключевые слова: рефлексия, патриотическое воспитание, дошкольники, нравственное развитие, самосознание, формирование эмоциональных ценностей, дошкольное образование.

**Introduction.** Patriotic education in early childhood represents a vital foundation for the moral and civic development of personality. It contributes to forming love and respect for the homeland, native language, cultural traditions, and people (Mukhina, 2012) [1]. However, in modern educational practice, there is growing recognition that genuine patriotism cannot be formed through instruction alone; it must arise from the child's personal experience and emotional reflection. Reflection in preschool education functions as a psychological and pedagogical process that enables the child to recognize their feelings, experiences, and attitudes toward social and cultural phenomena. Through guided reflective activities, children begin to understand what it means to belong to a community, to appreciate cultural values, and to feel pride and responsibility for their environment and heritage (Elkonin, 2001) [2]. Thus, reflection becomes not only a cognitive but also an emotional-moral mechanism in patriotic upbringing. It provides the link between the child's individual experience and the collective cultural context.

**Material and methods.** The research was based on: theoretical and methodological literature on reflection, moral and patriotic education in early childhood; analysis of educational programs for preschool institutions; observation of reflective and value-oriented activities of children in play and communication; creative works (drawings, storytelling, and dramatizations) reflecting patriotic feelings; interviews with educators and parents.

To study the role of reflection in patriotic education, the following methods were used: theoretical analysis – study and synthesis of psychological and pedagogical research on reflection and early moral development; pedagogical observation – of children's behavior, verbal responses, and emotional reactions during patriotic activities; qualitative content analysis – of children's speech and creative works to reveal reflective and value-laden meanings; modeling – development of a conceptual model integrating reflection into patriotic education practices. This methodological approach allowed the identification of age-appropriate forms of reflection that support the internalization of patriotic values in preschool children.

**Results and their discussion.** In preschool age, reflection is expressed primarily in the emotional and imaginative sphere. It helps children to: recognize their own feelings toward familiar people and places; connect personal experiences with the collective idea of "homeland"; perceive national symbols (flag, anthem, traditional objects) not as formal attributes but as emotionally meaningful elements of their environment. Through reflection, children internalize moral values – kindness, care, respect, gratitude – which form the emotional basis of patriotism. The reflective process develops empathy, the ability to compare "I" and "We," and the awareness of belonging to a community.

Reflection in preschool patriotic education must be adapted to the child's developmental level, emphasizing emotional and symbolic experience rather than abstract reasoning. The most effective forms include:

- Dialogic reflection: conversations with children after reading or storytelling (e.g., “How did the hero feel?”, “What do you love about your town?”) encourage emotional empathy and identification with positive moral models.
- Artistic reflection: drawings, crafts, songs, and dramatizations allow children to express love for their homeland through creative imagery.
- Play-based reflection: role play (“Helping others,” “Protecting nature,” “Celebrating a holiday together”) forms behavioral patterns of civic participation.
- Storytelling and folklore reflection: listening to folk tales, proverbs, and traditional songs helps children emotionally connect with national culture and understand moral ideals.
- Collective reflective rituals: group discussions, exhibitions of children’s art, or participation in symbolic events (raising the flag, planting trees) foster a sense of unity and shared responsibility.

For the effective process of patriotic education of preschoolers, the reflective environment of the preschool education institution is of great importance. A reflective educational environment in preschool education is a specially organized pedagogical space that promotes the emotional, cognitive, and moral development of children through self-awareness, empathy, and value reflection. It provides conditions for children to recognize and express their feelings, to understand the meaning of their experiences, and to establish personal connections with cultural, social, and natural phenomena. The reflective environment in preschool settings is not limited to physical surroundings; it encompasses the entire system of interactions, communication styles, activities, and educational values that shape the child’s inner world. It functions as both a developmental medium and a moral space, where every educational situation becomes an opportunity for the child to experience, interpret, and internalize values such as kindness, respect, love for the homeland, and responsibility toward others.

A reflective educational environment is characterized by emotional safety, trust, and openness. Its creation involves:

- consistent inclusion of reflection in daily routines (morning circles, summary talks after activities);
- integration of patriotic themes in play, art, and storytelling;
- use of multimedia and digital resources (interactive maps, video stories about local traditions);
- collaboration with families to extend reflective practices into the home environment.

Such an environment helps children connect personal experience with collective cultural values, thereby deepening their moral and patriotic consciousness.

The reflective educational environment in a preschool institution includes several interrelated dimensions.

1. Emotional-Social Dimension. This dimension provides psychological safety and trust between children, teachers, and parents. Emotional openness is the basis for reflection: the child must feel free to express feelings, ask questions, and talk about experiences. Educators model empathic listening, emotional sensitivity, and supportive feedback.

2. Cognitive-Value Dimension. Here, reflection is directed toward the comprehension of values and moral meanings. Teachers integrate ethical and patriotic content into daily activities – literature, storytelling, play, and nature observation – encouraging children to think about good deeds, friendship, cooperation, and belonging to their country and culture.

3. Aesthetic-Cultural Dimension. The environment should reflect the cultural identity of the community and the nation: traditional art, music, folklore, and national symbols. When children interact with aesthetically and culturally meaningful objects, they form emotional and reflective bonds with their heritage. Artistic reflection – through drawing, singing, or dramatization – becomes a way for children to express their moral and patriotic emotions.

4. Spatial-Material Dimension. The design of the physical environment also supports reflection. Corners for emotional relaxation, “zones of feelings,” and thematic displays

(e.g., “My Family,” “Our Town,” “Nature of My Country”) create opportunities for children to connect personal experiences with the social and natural world. The presence of mirrors, symbolic objects, and photo exhibitions encourages self-observation and dialogue about personal and collective identity.

5. Digital-Interactive Dimension. Modern reflective environments incorporate digital tools that expand opportunities for self-expression and communication. Digital storytelling, photo diaries, and multimedia portfolios allow children (with teacher mediation) to document their experiences, observe their progress, and share emotions. Interactive screens or audio recordings of children’s reflections make self-expression vivid and accessible.

Creating a reflective educational environment requires adherence to several key principles: humanistic orientation – the child is viewed as a unique personality with intrinsic value and the right to self-expression; emotional involvement – learning experiences must evoke feelings, empathy, and moral evaluation; dialogicity – reflection develops through dialogue; the teacher acts as a co-thinker, not a moral judge; cultural continuity – reflection is linked to cultural traditions, national symbols, and shared community experiences; integrativity – reflection is embedded in all types of preschool activities: play, communication, art, labor, and nature study; child-centeredness and co-reflection – adults and children reflect together, creating shared meanings and moral understanding.

The educator plays a decisive role as a facilitator of reflection. Their task is to: organize emotionally rich educational situations; encourage children to verbalize feelings and opinions; use open-ended reflective questions (“Why do you think it was right to help?” “How did you feel when your friend shared with you?”); support moral reasoning through stories, metaphors, and visual symbols; demonstrate reflective behavior themselves – self-evaluation, empathy, and gratitude. Through these actions, the teacher creates a safe atmosphere where children learn to connect emotion and morality, developing the first forms of self-awareness and civic identity [3; 4]. A truly reflective environment extends beyond the kindergarten walls. Cooperation with families helps to maintain continuity between home and educational reflection.

**Conclusion.** Reflection plays a pivotal role in the patriotic education of preschool children as it transforms external educational influences into internal, personally significant experiences. Through reflective dialogue, play, art, and cultural narratives, children develop empathy, moral awareness, and a sense of belonging to their homeland and community.

The study confirms that reflection enables the formation of emotionally grounded patriotism – not as imposed loyalty, but as conscious attachment to one’s culture, people, and moral ideals. The integration of reflective methods in preschool practice contributes to the holistic moral development of the child and lays the foundation for civic responsibility in later life.

Further research should explore age-specific techniques for developing reflection in early childhood and the use of digital storytelling and cultural heritage media to strengthen the reflective-emotional basis of patriotism.

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