

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL LITERACY IN DEVELOPING CIVIC AND INFORMATION CULTURE AMONG ADOLESCENT STUDENTS

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Abstract: This article examines the pedagogical role of social literacy in developing civic and information culture among adolescent students. The author scientifically reveals the essence of the concept of social literacy and its connection with civic education and skills for proper navigation in the information space. The article analyzes the importance of social literacy in adolescents' critical attitude toward information, understanding of digital security, legal awareness, and recognition of social responsibility. The article suggests methods and methodological approaches for developing this literacy in the modern educational environment.

Keywords: social literacy, civic education, information culture, adolescence, critical thinking, digital safety, information competence, social awareness, legal education, media literacy

Article Text: In today's era of globalization and digital transformation, developing civic consciousness and the ability to properly navigate the information space, especially for adolescent students, is one of the most urgent tasks. This process can be thoroughly illuminated through the concept of social literacy. Social literacy refers to an individual's ability to act actively, consciously, ethically, and legally in society, as well as to evaluate, filter, and properly use information. Adolescence is a period when a person's socialization enters a strong phase, with increased understanding of self-identity, comprehension of one's role in society, and desire for independent information processing. Therefore, strengthening the foundations of social literacy during this age period is pedagogically extremely important.

The decrees of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan regarding education and upbringing, particularly the idea that "New Uzbekistan begins at school," place great emphasis on strengthening the social activity, information culture, and civic position of the growing generation. This approach, in turn, requires the formation of all components of social literacy – information culture, critical thinking, legal culture, and social consciousness.

The concept of social literacy has been illuminated from various perspectives in foreign and local research. For instance, pedagogues such as J. Dewey and P. Freire substantiated the importance of social consciousness and critical thinking, while Uzbek researchers like S. Nishonova, B. Turakhodjaev, and G. Juraev have identified the pedagogical and psychological foundations of this process. Their work demonstrates the effectiveness of activating methods, interactive lessons, and educational technologies based on social problems in developing social literacy.

Adolescents are a group that works with information frequently and rapidly. It is crucial at this age to develop skills such as assessing the reliability of information coming through social networks, mass media, and internet resources; critically approaching false and manipulative information; and understanding social responsibility. Otherwise, young people may fall into streams of incorrect information and be drawn into socially dangerous tendencies.

Therefore, it is important to systematically teach social literacy in civic education classes, lessons aimed at forming information culture, social sciences, literature, and legal education

courses at school. In these classes, students should be taught to analyze information, compare sources, properly evaluate social situations, express their opinions with substantiation, and respect democratic values. Students need to be instilled with skills to form their own social position, to respond thoughtfully rather than intolerantly to different opinions, and to promote ideas of social justice and solidarity.

In modern conditions, elements such as using ICT tools, analyzing media texts, teaching information security rules, and familiarizing students with information rights play a special role in shaping information culture. For example, interactive classroom activities to identify "fake news," analyze "online communication ethics," and learn the concept of "digital footprint" increase a student's level of social literacy.

The teacher plays a leading role in developing social literacy. The teacher not only guides students to information but also transforms them into conscious citizens, cultured information consumers, and socially responsible individuals. Therefore, special modules on social literacy, information competence, and civic culture should be included in special trainings and professional development courses for educators.

In conclusion, social literacy plays a central role in developing adolescents' civic and information culture. It is considered a strategic factor not only for the personal development of the younger generation but also for ensuring social stability, the formation of civil society, and information security.

Conclusions and recommendations:

1. It is recommended to integrate social literacy as a separate module in curricula.
2. Interactive manuals on civic and information culture should be developed for adolescents.
3. Master classes on media literacy and digital culture should be conducted in schools.
4. Regular trainings should be organized to enhance teachers' information competence.
5. Developing social literacy through discussions, debates, and projects based on real social situations in social science classes is considered effective.

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