



# Specifics of Educational Successfulness Development in Primary School Students in Relation to Age and Psychological Traits

N. V. Sevrukova

*Institute of Art Education and Cultural Studies of the Russian Academy of Education  
Pogodinskaya Street, 8/1, Moscow, 119121, Russia*

## Abstract

Folk toy is a key that grants primary school students an opportunity to gain a full impression of the world. The history of folk toy started in the distant past; a toy possesses such amount of information that it can be used as a tool for developing an integral worldview and the erudition in primary school students. Primary school students study the world around them by mastering different types of activities and comprehending their life experience, even if it is rather scarce. Variety of modern artistic materials and their availability for students allows learning traditional artistic crafts, as well as searching for new interpretations of the contemporary art. The relevance of the present study is defined by the need to perfect the knowledge about the heritage of folk toy masters and artistic creative development of the students in applied and folk art.

**Keywords:** applied art, folk toy, mentoring, natural materials, primary school student, teaching, worldview.

## INTRODUCTION

A worldview starts developing from early childhood. As a puzzle that is combined from pieces step by step, the development of a child's worldview also happens gradually. Disperse concepts and events, impressions, knowledge and abilities are gradually combined in an integral system of representations of the world of nature, relationships between people, national and family traditions. As a child grows, learns and is mentored, the worldview is complemented. However, in any correctly finished puzzle, it is possible to see a certain image; similarly, the development of a child's worldview has to be aimed at a certain result.

The world of primary school students is complicated because of a child's integration is the school world with its responsibility and active socializing. The dictionary defines socializing (from Latin "socialis") as "a process of acquiring a certain system of knowledge, norms and values that allows a person to function as a rightful member of the society. Socializing includes both socially controlled processes of precise influence on a personality (mentoring) and spontaneous processes that affect its development..." [1]. Primary school students need to understand and learn the laws of the world around them, in order to fit in, understand it well and be able to trace the causal links. The children also have to acquire a worldview as an integral system of knowledge and ideas about the world, integration of interconnected systematic ideas about the structure of the world, the Universe, human's place in it, his/her cognitive and creative capabilities [2, 3]. According to K.D. Ushinskiy, the integral worldview is a model of the world that is preserved in the spiritual memory of a nation, in its conscience and culture as a systematic representation of temporal and spatial existence of the world, the infinity of the Universe and humanity's place in it; it is a living, dynamic, open and developing system of philosophical, religious, scientific, artistic and aesthetical images [4].

Development of the worldview in primary school students is defined by the specifics of their age. It is favorable for acquiring initial knowledge, for spiritual development, as well as the development of children's moral values. Primary school education should aim at developing general learning skills that provide an opportunity for continuing the education in the general school, and the ability to learn, i.e. the skills of self-organization in solving the educational tasks. The functions and aims of project activity in primary school help to develop independence in education, support children's individuality, create an educational community and master the techniques of actions.

In his studies of the specifics of primary school students' development, B.S. Volkov pointed out that: "a) development and establishment of a personality of a primary school student is a social process. A child takes the social position

of a school student; b) development and establishment of a personality occurs in the process of a student's activity; c) upon a child's entry to school, learning becomes the leading type of activity that, unlike game, is mandatory, goal-directed, socially significant and systematic; d) primary school student's activity in relation to his/her environment is always mediated by the relationships with adults and peers" [5].

As we can see from these conclusions, at this age, game becomes secondary, and a child is attracted by the productive and relevant activity.

And what about the place of a toy in a primary student's life? What is a toy's role? A child enters a new world, a world of school. A child has to be able to adapt to the conditions of school and its world. This new world can be uncomfortable for a child, and therefore, a primary school student might experience certain difficulties; maybe he/she will have trouble with studying, finding new friends, understanding them or being able to listen to them.

For primary school students, a toy becomes the "intermediate bridge" that helps a child to develop his/her worldview in the conditions of school. Referring to a toy (both folk and contemporary one) in the pedagogical practice helps to restore child's inner comfort; it takes away the negative symptoms that occur because of the change of place and different types of activity at school, as well as the need to follow a new schedule of life. By continuing interacting with toys, primary school students study successfully, while being satisfied with the educational process at school.

Primary school students will play along with studying. Would it create conflict with the educational direction of the school? On the contrary, it would facilitate a better comprehension of the world. Primary school students experience emotional and personal discomfort when they get disciplined in school or when they fail in the educational activity. Children's emotional strain related to education might accumulate, and in this case, children might fall back in learning, their urges would not be aimed at achieving success in education. A toy can help children to overcome this emotional and personal discomfort. A child can tell a toy about his/her failures, and the toy will "understand". Exactly as it happens in the folk tale about Vasilisa the Wise, a doll acts as a listener and an advisor in difficult life situations: "... when you experience any grief, give her (the doll) some food and ask her for advice. She will eat and tell you how to help the grief". And the doll teaches "how to be and to live and what to do" ([www.russkaja-skazka.ru/vasilisa-prekrasnaya/](http://www.russkaja-skazka.ru/vasilisa-prekrasnaya/)) [6]. The tale does not say what kind of doll it was. But we can imagine that it was a ragged doll.

The researchers of ragged dolls state that these dolls had a special role in Russia. A ragged doll was related to the cult of fertility, hearth and home, worship of the female deity. A doll

made by a mother for her child gave the child security, the feeling of safety and positive emotions [7].

Primary school students are faced with a new way of acquiring knowledge and revealing axiological directions and meaning of various objects in their life. The situation changes, a primary school student changes together with his/her attitude towards toys.

According to N.E. Afanasyeva, providing successfulness in education and mentoring primary school students requires considering the following age and psychological traits:

- Child's needs in game activity;
- Inability to perform a monotonous activity for a prolonged period of time. According to psychologists, 7-9-year-old children cannot maintain their attention on a single object for more than 7-10 minutes. After that, children begin to get distracted, shift their attention to other objects, and therefore, it is necessary to constantly change the types of activity during lessons ([www.psychology.snauka.ru/2017/11/8406](http://www.psychology.snauka.ru/2017/11/8406)) [8].

A factor is the leading force and reason of a certain process or phenomenon; it is a relevant circumstance in a certain process or phenomenon [9, p. 530]. The study of the image and nature of folk toy as a factor of worldview development in primary school students was conducted in the types of activity that were adequate for the age: game, modelling, guided tours, observation, productive activity, etc.

Different areas of Russia have very original local forms of toys and methods of their production. The toys were made of wood or clay, decorated with an ornament or without one, folded from colored cloths (ragged toy), natural materials, such as cane, hay, cones, moss, bird feathers and other materials – folk toys are impressive in their variety. For example, the coloring of Filimonovo toy (Tula region) is the simplest ornament of horizontal stripes which is fascinating in its decorative abundance of color, brave combination of green, fuchsia and yellow paint. Kargopol toy is decorated in a way that represents the motives of ancient ornaments, such as solar signs, that contain certain information. Dymkovo toy reflects the vivid interest of craftsmen in the city life of the XIX century, their sharp observational skills and ability to briefly and precisely describe the toy characters: a foster-nurse, a water carrier, a lady with an umbrella, a dog and a clutch, a dancing couple, etc. The “ladies” often wear dresses with ruffles on the wide sleeves and skirts; they wear wide-brimmed hats on the voluminous hair typical for the end of the XIX century. Similarly, the wooden Bogordsk toys, such as figures of people, real or fictional animals and birds in all their variety, preserve the intrinsic attractiveness of the folk art [10, p. 341]. Regardless of which impressive creations of the folk art we addressed, the toys were always solid and beautiful, but also, in the words of N.D. Bartram, “they carry the responsibility of affecting a child's development, helping to develop his/her thinking, creative powers, the beginning of his/her work and knowledge” [11, p. 45].

#### METHODS

Developing of the worldview in primary school students during the lessons about the folk toy can be goal-directed, active and emotional, if:

- One selects illustrative material for the lesson so that it would serve as the basis for developing creative skills and, at the same time, would fit the didactic requirements;
- One uses the techniques, methods and forms of work that facilitate the creation of an atmosphere of calm and creative activity that develops a child's interest;
- One chooses the techniques for showing the examples of art objects in different types of folk toys;

- One interacts with the students' parents and facilitates their involvement in the educational and learning activity;
- One develops creative tasks with methodic recommendations by using different forms of conducting the lessons.

One of the traditional and the most convenient forms of conducting lessons is conducting them in a classroom. If one chooses to use this form of lessons, they should have a sufficient number of folk toys in the original author production. Using such folk toys during the lessons provides the highest availability and helps to acquire knowledge. The primary school students discuss and learn the study material on the example of studying the image and the nature of the folk toy, which facilitates the worldview development.

By involving folk toy, discussing its artistic image and defining its specific traits, we can find answers to many questions of primary school students' education and mentoring. The fields of cognition, science and activity, which are seemingly distant from folk art and folk toy, are reflected in the nature and the image of the folk toy. We will describe a few topics that should refer to the folk toy.

**“Semantics of patterns of folk toys”.** Primary school students acquire and consolidate the knowledge about the semantics of patterns. The history of symbolic paintings originates in ancient times. The symbols reflected the ideas about life and religious beliefs of ancient people. The symbols were attributed a mystic, sacred origin, and they were addressed solely as something incomprehensible for a mere mortal, inaccessible for his/her conscience [12]. The symbols of earth and water, field and sun are clear to school students. Moreover, initially, students perceive the images of the symbols as a very simple geometric pattern. The symbol of water is a wavy line, the symbol of the earth is a rectangle with crossed lines, and the symbol of the sun is a circle.

A child learns about the meaning of these symbols and comprehends the world. The sun is always round; only during the sunrise and the sunset, it can be a part of a circle (semi-circle, sector). The sun in the sky is in constant movement: we see that the sun rises in the East in the morning and sets in the West in the evening. It passes through the whole sky. The children would give different answers to the question “how can you describe the sun?”. They might describe it from the perspective of color, temperature, brightness, movement, time of the day, season. The sun can be of any color depending on the environment. In the painting of the folk toys, the sun is represented in different ways, with different paints and ways of painting. These different choices are largely influenced by an artist's perception of the world, his/her imagination, memory, fantasy and traditions of a certain artistic craft (Filimonovo toys, Kargopol toys).

Table 1 summarizes primary school students' perception of the sun.

When children see the symbol of the sun in the toys (which can look like a circle, a circle with rays represented by colorful triangles, a circle with a dot, a ring, spirals, swastika, as well as circular patterns, since they all represent the sun, the life and the good), they can compare it with the definitions they gave. It would be easier for them to remember those symbols, and therefore, they would paint the toys with the awareness that a circle is not only a geometric pattern but also a symbol of the sun. The children would think of the sun, not only as the source of light but also as the source of life, good harvest and life forces of nature in general. They would begin to respect the earth and the water. These sacred symbols painted on Filimonovo and Kargopol clay toys reveal a bit of the natural world to the primary school children. The patterns look simple and straightforward. Additionally, one can also focus on describing other schematic images with the children: for example, branches and fir trees

represent the tree of life, succession of generations and constant growth.

**“Color”.** Here students study colors and shades of paint, determine the possibility of mixing different colors and interaction between different shades, by referring to colorful painted toys (clay Dymkovo or Filimonovo toys or wooden Bogorodskoe toys).

**“Natural materials in folk art”.** Students study the variety of natural materials and refer to folk toys made of wood, metal, hay, clay, bone, and even from duck’s beak (a ritual toy of a nation living in Yamal – Khanty). Clay as a natural material becomes familiar to students since the whole process of making clay toys based on the motives of Kargopol and Filimonovo toys is a process of transforming a shapeless piece of clay into a real image (of a human, animal or fictional figure). The sculpting is conducted by elongating and separating different elements. The lesson can be conducted in form of ecologic talk where children not only learn how folk craftsmen use natural materials for making toys but also how they preserve and protect the natural resources of their homeland.

**“Animals in nature and folk toys”.** The favorite character of folk toys is a bear. Folk toys craftsmen made it “anthropomorphic” – found and created an artistic image of a bear that performed the activities typical for humans; the bear makes straw shoes, reads a book, exercises (Bogorodskoe toy), or holds a tree in its paws (Kargopol toy). Toy craftsmen gave the bear different personalities – happy, thinking, hard-working, but never aggressive. Craftsmen were seemingly unaware, or did not want to notice, the nature and behavior of this predatory animal, despite the fact that Bogorodskoe village and Kargopol were surrounded by wild forests, and people often encountered bears. The folk craftsmen that lived surrounded by forests and knew about the nature of this animal from their own experience reflected their attitude towards this beautiful but dangerous animal in their toys. Alfred Brehm wrote in his famous book “Brehm’s Life of Animals” that “...It would have been even more dangerous if it was blood-thirsty and cunning. Luckily, our mighty warrior has the personality of a knight that lacks any cruelty or lies. Not being able to deceive, it succeeds through open force and without resorting to pointless cruelty” ([www.rulit.me/books/zhizn-zhivotnyh-tom-i-mlekopitayushchie-read-55933-92.html](http://www.rulit.me/books/zhizn-zhivotnyh-tom-i-mlekopitayushchie-read-55933-92.html)) [13]. Moreover, not all toys were bears (that live in Central Russia) that were painted brown. The bear of the Filimonovo toys is decorated with yellow and red stripes, while the craftsmen of the Bogorodskoe art did not paint the toys that were carved from linden trees but the carvings were a rather precise representation of the animal’s fur.

Figures of birds are deeply symbolic as well – they represent happiness; horses represent wealth, etc.

**“Healthy lifestyle”.** When we address the promotion of healthy lifestyle, rational nutrition and the importance of following a routine for primary school students, we can use the help from the artistic images of the Bogorodskoe toys, such as a bear washing itself, a bear washing a little bear – the “Bathroom” toy, “Sweet tooth” – the image of a bear that is scooping honey out of a barrel with a ladle, “Tea time” – a bear near a samovar.

**“Work”.** The Bogorodskoe toys include toys that are equipped with a simple lever and represent different types of human and animal activity. “Dynamic toys introduce children to the world that manifests itself in a special way, creates a pattern of sensations, feelings and emotions” [14, p. 542]. It idealizes and praises different types of work, such as the work of a blacksmith, sawing trees, taking trees down, etc. At the lesson, the advantages of working in a team, with likeminded people could be discussed, the Bogorodskoe toy “Blacksmiths”, in which a bear and a man are forging could be used. This toy introduces primary school

students to the work of a blacksmith, it allows studying the tools for forging as well (anvil and hammers of different size). Children will come to a conclusion that even the most physically demanding labor becomes easier, more interesting and joyful if one works together with like-minded people. In order to expand this topic, we would also use another form of a lesson, a workshop where primary school students would learn to make toys similar to the folk ragged dolls. The children would begin to understand the meaning of work through a hand-made toy. A primary school student would need to apply significant effort, be persistent and accurate in order to make a ragged doll on his/her own, or sculpt a toy horse from clay (or playdough).

A joyful and happy image of the traditional ragged doll was created with a coloristic solution – the use of either bright or contrast clothes that created a cheerful mood.

The simplicity of making such doll makes it fully accessible for primary school students. While making such a doll, a child pays attention to the sequence of actions and can propose some options for decorating the doll (such as choosing and combining different types of cloth – cotton, wool, the mixed ones, as well as different patterns of the cloth, texture of the material, strings, ribbons, lace, etc.). Such a creative approach to making a ragged doll develops artistic taste in primary school students and develops their erudition. Moreover, the urge and love for making ragged dolls are observed not only in girls but also in boys. A primary school student can make a ragged doll in one academic hour. In this time, he/she acquires information about the history of ragged dolls, their semantic meaning in people’s lives, and masters the skills of working with cloth and other materials in practice. He/she creatively solves multiple problems, such as choosing the size of the doll, the color of the doll’s clothes, etc. A child learns to overcome difficulties that occur in the process of making the doll.

If a mother or grandmother practice crafts (sewing, knitting, embroidery, lace-knitting, etc.), a child will imitate their work, and he/she can produce a whole collection of paper dolls dressed in beautiful dresses and costumes painted to imitate embroidery or lace. This way, a child reacts to the events around him/her and the masters at the level that’s accessible to him/her, the skills that are common among his/her parents and relatives. Modern children urge to unify in groups based on interests, to be a team of likeminded individuals that work on a project. It is pedagogically correct to stimulate primary school students to feel joy from teamwork on a single project for making one (complex, big and multi-element) toy, or a series of toys.

**“Sport”.** The topic of physical education and sport is well represented in the images of the Bogorodskoe toys that look like bears or hairs doing sport, playing sports games, etc. - “A skier bear”, “A biathlete bear”, “A chess-playing bear”. Such toys focus a child’s attention on the need to do sport and participate in physical education.

**“Behaving on the road”.** This topic helps the prophylactics of children’s road accidents and develops the ability to behave properly on the streets of cities and villages. By using the images of the Bogorodskoe toys “A bear on a motorcycle”, “A bear on a bicycle”, “A bear on a scooter”, a teacher has an opportunity to remind children about the road regulations and the rules of crossing the road.

**“Modern computer and children”.** The ability to work with computers is represented by the artistic image of Bogorodskoe toy “A programmer bear”.

“Birds are our friends. Domestic birds. Wild birds”. In the Dymkovo toys, the craftswomen use a combination of fictional images with the images of real birds as domestic animals (turkeys, chickens, ducks, hens) and the wild ones (magpie). The birds are painted in a fascinatingly beautiful way that uses all traditional Dymkovo colors and intertwining of saturated

ornaments. They are generously decorated with pieces of gold foil, and the combination of contrast color and mate golden shine creates amazing beauty. The craftswomen use a lot of red, yellow, blue and green paint, which makes the toys especially bright and festive. They create ornaments from direct and wavy stripes, circles and dots, squares in different combinations. The diamonds of tinsel gold that are glued on top of the ornament create the festiveness and vibrancy of the toys.

**“Folk art”**. Folk music is represented in the image of “A bear with a balalaika” (Bogorodskoe toy).

**“Rest”**. Ability to rest and properly spend the free time after a work day is reflected in the image of “A fishing bear” (Bogorodskoe toy).

**“Ecology”**. The aim of developing the ecological culture in school students consists in raising a mindful attitude towards nature. In folk culture, mindful attitude towards nature is the guarantee of the folk crafts development, guarantee of the craft prosperity, because traditional toys are made only from natural materials. It implies the knowledge of natural materials, craftsman’s attitude towards them, careful waste-free production that uses even the smallest pieces of clay, wood and other materials for the toys. Even the smallest pieces were processed carefully and painted with the smallest details.

As we can see, folk toys are funny, amusing and bright toys that are aimed at providing children with positive emotions, joy and happiness. They carry the relevant information about the important and necessary things in everyday life of a primary school student, e.g., how to live healthily, do sports, perceive the nature, understand beauty and harmony of colors, in a comprehensible form.

The lessons about folk toys involve various types of activity. Primary school students not only learn the theoretical material but also actively participate in the practical lessons in sculpture, painting, creation of collages or cut-outs, design or constructing, creation and presentation of projects on the topics close to the folk toys.

The toys develop aesthetic feelings that “are highly important not only for the pedagogics but also for the society, because, ideally, the aesthetic element has to be present in any human activity” [15]. The result of primary school students’ work with folk toys is represented by well-developed integrated qualities that help to create an integral worldview:

- A child can communicate with adults and peers, consider his/her own interests and interests of others (using verbal and non-verbal communication tools, being able to agree, distributing the roles during teamwork);
- A child is able to plan his/her actions, create an algorithm (a sequence) of performing creative work and reaching the set goal of the creative work;
- A child is able to work according to an example, to come up with and execute various jobs; he/she gains experience in working with various materials;
- A child gets an impression of his/her land, its traditional folk crafts and traditions of folk toys;
- A child develops the ideas of primary axiological representations, axiological orientations, following the conventional norms and rules of conduct (following the rules of behaving on the street (road regulations), in public spaces (transport, shops, hospitals, theater, etc.);
- A child is able to solve intellectual and personal problems that are adequate for his/her age (using the acquired knowledge and ways of acting for solving new problems);
- A child acquires primary ideas about the society, its cultural values, and about the world and nature;

- A child develops representations of himself/herself, about his/her and other people’s gender, about family and family traditions;
- A child acquires knowledge about the fundamentals of safety, e.g. ecological and road safety.

Primary school students gain the experience of activity, creative work and overcoming difficulties. Psychologists that study primary school students point out that, in school, “the study load increases with time, but if a student is required to be independent in his/her studies and he/she does not see any real achievements in his/her work and is not capable of overcoming the difficulties, his/her attitude towards studying can change to the worse. In order to prevent this from happening, it is necessary to develop interest towards the study material, and developing this interest, in turn, depends on developing students’ educational activity *per se*” [5].

Therefore, we can observe that when one uses different images of folk toys, thus using a certain amount of information in education and mentoring, folk toys become a factor of development of an integral worldview and expansion of primary school students’ erudition, because it involves various forms of activity and makes students comprehend their life experience, however limited it might be.

#### DISCUSSION

The goal of any teacher and parent is to develop a child’s understanding that life is an eternal value and that interactions with people are the most valuable possession any of us can have. In the words of N.D. Bartman, “...by having a whole range of different values, toys are essentially divided into the toys that serve as “joy for children” and the toys that “reflect life, serving as its mirror” [11, p. 46].

Currently, folk toys are getting an increasingly relevant role in the educational space of school and in the extra-curricular education. However, together with that, folk toys are still perceived as something not serious enough, something so archaic that it cannot be used in the modern education. Folk toys help children to learn to work; they develop children’s erudition and worldview. According to L.S. Malik, “The plots used in the creation of folk toys involve the most ordinary routine situations that are close and clear to children and necessary in life, and therefore, they are interesting for children and stimulate their learning activity. Therefore, the process of socializing with the help of folk toys, which reflect the infinite number of a person’s connections, is not something external and forced, but an objective need of a person’s being” (<http://www.hnh.ru/culture/2011-04-02-5>) [16]. O.Yu. Komissarova and E.M. Khananeeva point out that moral mentoring is a gradual, goal-directed influence on a person’s moral and emotional development that occurs through the organization of the conditions for developing a person’s spiritual, emotional and belief systems and behavior according to the moral of the society and general moral and ethical values of the humankind [17, p. 14]. The modern and future society requires creative people with wide range of knowledge, whose actions would be directed at creating and fulfilling new ideas.

**Table 1 – Primary school students’ perspective on the perception of the sun**

Perspective on the sun description	Trait
Color	Yellow, red, green, grey, white; multicolored, single-colored
Temperature	Hot, cold, warm, scorching
Brightness	Bright, dim, dull
Season	Winter, spring, summer, fall
Time of the day	Morning, day, noon, evening

### CONCLUSION

The artistic image, personality and appearance of a toy contains a large amount of information about the world. Children will gradually comprehend this information upon the development of their cognitive skills and the establishment of the activity-based approach. Folk toys develop memory and imagination; they teach primary school students to analyze and compare the obtained information, to comprehend the natural phenomena and social events; they also develop children's creative abilities. By using folk toys, it is possible to orient primary school students in developing the personality traits of primary school graduates. They would correspond with the "portrait of a primary school graduate" that is recommended by the Federal Education Standard of general primary education, which includes:

- A child that loves his/her nation, his/her land and country;
- A child that respects and accepts the values of family and the society;
- A child that is curious and actively explores the world;
- A child that mastered the basics of the ability to learn and is capable of organizing his/her own activity;
- A child that is ready to act independently and be responsible for his/her own actions to the family and the society;
- A child that is kind and capable of listening and hearing others, and rationalize his/her own position and express his/her own opinion;
- A child that follows the rules of lifestyle that is healthy and safe for him/her and for others (<https://xn--80abucjiihbv9a.xn--p1ai/%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%BA%D1%83%D0%BC%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%82%D1%8B/922, www.infourok.ru/konsultaciya-dlya-vospitateley-formirovanie-celostnoy-kartini-mira-788266.html>) [18, 19].

There are many different ways to develop primary school students' worldview and to create an algorithm of mentoring and teaching but it seems that there is not a single established, validated and described pedagogical approach. However, the modern life makes its changes in the pedagogical approaches and reveals new angles of worldview development in primary school students with the help of the folk toys.

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