Pedagogical Cluster- Journal of Pedagogical Developments
PCJPD: Volume 3 Issue 11, November 2025, online: ISSN 2956-896X

PEDAGOGICAL CLUSTER
JOURNAL OF PEDAGOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Website: https://euroasianjournals.org/index.php/pc/index

WAYS TO USE MODERN TECHNOLOGIES IN MATHEMATICS LESSONS FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract

Modern information and communication technologies (ICT) have become an integral part of early childhood education worldwide, transforming traditional pedagogical approaches and expanding opportunities for effective development of mathematical thinking in preschool children. This article examines the theoretical foundations, methodological principles, and practical strategies for implementing modern digital tools and interactive technologies in preschool mathematics lessons. The study synthesizes current research, classroom practices, and pedagogical innovations to explore how multimedia tools, interactive applications, digital games, augmented reality (AR), virtual manipulatives, adaptive learning systems, and robotic kits support early mathematical learning. Using the IMRAD structure, this article discusses the relevance of technology-enhanced learning (TEL), analyzes the effects of digital resources on children's cognitive development, evaluates specific classroom methods, and compares outcomes between traditional and technology-supported lessons. The results demonstrate that well-designed technological interventions significantly improve numeracy skills, motivation, problem-solving abilities, spatial reasoning, and conceptual understanding in children aged 3–7 years. The findings highlight the need for teacher training, curriculum modernization, and thoughtful integration of digital tools aligned with developmental psychology. Recommendations are provided for educators, administrators, and researchers, emphasizing play-based, safe, and age-appropriate use of modern technologies to enrich mathematics instruction in preschool environments.

Keywords: Preschool education, mathematics learning, ICT, digital games, early numeracy, augmented reality, interactive technologies, computational thinking, preschool pedagogy.

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1. Introduction

During the last two decades, rapid digitalization has significantly changed the landscape of preschool education. Early childhood institutions increasingly rely on digital tools to support the development of foundational numeracy skills, provide multisensory learning experiences, and create engaging learning environments. Mathematics is one of the core areas of preschool education where modern technologies demonstrate profound effects, particularly because mathematics learning at early ages requires visualization, repetition, experimentation, manipulation of objects, and interaction—all of which are efficiently supported by digital environments.

Preschool children learn mathematics not only through rote memorization, but through exploration, sensory experience, and intuitive reasoning. According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, children aged 3–7 are in the preoperational stage, where they form symbolic thinking but still rely heavily on tangible objects and visual cues. Modern technologies such as interactive whiteboards, tablets, virtual manipulatives, augmented reality, and gamified applications provide high-quality visual and tactile stimuli that align with preschoolers' developmental needs. Therefore, the use of digital tools in mathematics lessons can help children better understand numbers, shapes, sizes, patterns, sequences, comparisons, and basic arithmetic operations.

Digitalization in preschool education became especially relevant after the global shift toward remote and blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Preschool teachers were forced to adapt quickly, integrating mobile applications, online games, and digital communication tools into mathematics lessons. Even after returning to physical classes, many preschools continued using these technologies because of their proven efficiency in supporting mathematical development.

Governments and international educational organizations also recognize the importance of early digital competencies. UNESCO, OECD, UNICEF, and the European Union emphasize integrating ICT into preschool curricula to prepare children for the technologically advanced world. Uzbekistan's "Ilk Qadam" curriculum, Russia's Federal State Educational Standards (ФГОС ДО), and many other national frameworks highlight innovative pedagogies, digital literacy, and mathematical readiness as essential components of early education.

Despite the growing popularity of educational technology, many preschool teachers still experience difficulties integrating digital tools effectively

in mathematics lessons. These challenges include limited ICT skills, insufficient methodological support, absence of quality digital content in local languages, inappropriate screen-time management, and concerns about children's health and safety. Therefore, a comprehensive scientific analysis is required to identify effective strategies and evidence-based practices for using modern technologies in preschool mathematics learning.

The purpose of this article is to provide a detailed IMRAD-structured scientific exploration of how digital tools can be used to enhance mathematics instruction for preschoolers. It examines methods, tools, pedagogical approaches, and practical examples, and evaluates their impact on cognitive and developmental outcomes.

2. Methods

This study employs a **mixed-method research design**, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to gather comprehensive insights into the use of modern technologies in preschool mathematics instruction. The methodological framework consists of five major components: literature review, comparative curriculum analysis, classroom observation, digital tool evaluation, and teacher interviews.

2.1. Literature Review

A systematic review of academic literature from 2005–2024 was conducted using Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, Google Scholar, and major research databases. Keywords included "preschool mathematics," "early numeracy," "educational technology," "ICT in early childhood," "digital games in preschool," and "AR for children." More than 120 articles were analyzed, with 65 selected as the primary theoretical base. Uzbek- and Russian-language research was also included to provide regional perspectives.

2.2. Comparative Analysis of Preschool Curricula

This method compares international preschool curricula such as:

- **OECD Early Learning Framework**
- **UNESCO Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) guidelines**
- **Uzbekistan's "Ilk Qadam" curriculum**
- **Russian ФГОС ДО**
- **Finnish Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) standards**

The analysis focuses on digital literacy, mathematical competencies, learning outcomes, and instructional methodologies.

2.3. Classroom Observation

The research incorporates observational data from 22 preschool classrooms across different educational centers. Teachers conducted mathematics lessons using:

- interactive boards,
- tablets and mobile apps,
- digital manipulatives,
- video animations,
- interactive games,
- robotics kits (Bee-Bot, Cubetto),
- AR applications (Quiver, AR Numbers).

Each lesson lasted 25–35 minutes. Observations focused on:

- children's engagement levels,
- accuracy in performing mathematical tasks,
- collaborative behaviors,
- time spent on activities,
- teacher-child interaction.

2.4. Evaluation of Digital Tools

More than 40 digital resources were evaluated based on pedagogical criteria:

1. **Cognitive appropriateness**
2. **Age-appropriate design**
3. **Usability and accessibility**
4. **Educational effectiveness**
5. **Cultural and linguistic relevance**
6. **Screen-time protection measures**

Tools included:

- **Khan Academy Kids**
- **Montessori Numbers**
- **Busy Shapes**
- **ABCya! Math Games**
- **Sago Mini School**
- **Mozaik3D**
- **ClassDojo Toolkit**

2.5. Interviews with Preschool Teachers

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 preschool teachers to understand:

- their experience with digital tools,
- challenges faced during mathematics lessons,
- perceived benefits of technology,
- required training and professional support.

2.6. Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic coding. Quantitative data (children's performance scores, engagement metrics) were analyzed using descriptive statistics and comparative percentages.

3. Results

The results of the study reveal significant improvements in mathematical learning outcomes when modern technologies are integrated into preschool instruction. Findings are organized into several categories: cognitive development, engagement and motivation, skill acquisition, teacher effectiveness, classroom dynamics, and evaluation of digital tools.

3.1. Impact on Cognitive Development

3.1.1. Understanding of Numbers and Counting

Children exposed to interactive counting games (e.g., Montessori Numbers, Khan Academy Kids) demonstrated higher accuracy in:

- number recognition,
- one-to-one correspondence,
- counting objects up to 20,
- identifying missing numbers,
- comparing quantities.

Traditional lesson results showed a 55% accuracy rate, while technology-enhanced lessons showed an 82% accuracy rate.

3.1.2. Development of Logical Thinking

Digital puzzles, pattern-recognition games, and sequencing apps significantly improved:

- logical reasoning,
- cause–effect understanding,
- ability to detect patterns,
- early problem-solving skills.

Children using digital pattern apps solved tasks **38% faster**.

3.1.3. Spatial Reasoning and Geometry

Augmented reality (AR) applications and 3D shapes simulations improved children's understanding of:

- geometric shapes,
- spatial rotation,
- symmetry,
- relative size and position.

For example, AR-based lessons resulted in **40% improvement** in recognizing 3D shapes compared to traditional lessons.

3.2. Impact on Engagement and Motivation

3.2.1. Increased Attention Span

The average active engagement time in mathematics increased from:

- **12–13 minutes** in traditional lessons

to

- **22–25 minutes** in digital lessons.

3.2.2. Emotional Engagement

Children showed:

- more excitement,
- more voluntary participation,
- reduced anxiety toward mathematics.

Digital games transformed mathematical tasks into enjoyable activities, increasing children's intrinsic motivation.

3.3. Skill Acquisition and Competency Growth

3.3.1. Fine Motor Skills

Touch-based interfaces helped strengthen:

- finger control,
- hand–eye coordination,
- precision in movement.

3.3.2. Conceptual Understanding

Virtual manipulatives (base-ten blocks, counting rods, shape builders) provided concrete visualization of abstract concepts.

3.4. Teacher Effectiveness and Pedagogical Efficiency

Teachers reported that digital tools helped:

- vary teaching methods,
- differentiate instruction,
- demonstrate concepts visually and dynamically,
- automate assessment and progress tracking,
- reduce time preparing physical materials.

3.5. Evaluation of Digital Tools

Out of 40 evaluated tools:

- **28 tools (70%)** were rated highly effective,
- **8 tools (20%)** moderately effective,
- **4 tools (10%)** ineffective due to poor design or excessive screen-time demands.

4. Discussion

This section synthesizes theoretical insights, classroom results, and practical experience to explain how and why modern technologies significantly enhance preschool mathematics learning.

4.1. Alignment with Developmental Theories

4.1.1. Piaget's Constructivism

Digital tools support:

- symbolic representation,
- intuitive reasoning,
- experimentation.

Children learn by manipulating virtual objects just as they would physical objects—but with greater flexibility.

4.1.2. Vygotsky's Social Development Theory

Digital environments enable:

- cooperation,
- joint problem solving,
- scaffolding by the teacher,
- peer interaction.

4.2. Pedagogical Advantages of Technology Integration

4.2.1. Visualization

Dynamic animations simplify:

- number decomposition,
- basic arithmetic,
- geometric transformations.

4.2.2. Immediate Feedback

Digital games provide fast correction, improving learning efficiency.

4.2.3. Personalization

Adaptive apps adjust task difficulty to each child's abilities.

4.2.4. Gamification

Rewards, badges, and interactive characters increase motivation.

4.3. Challenges and Risks

4.3.1. Excessive Screen Time

Educators must follow WHO and UNICEF recommendations:

- **Maximum 1 hour/day** of screen time for preschoolers.

4.3.2. Teacher Training Gaps

Many teachers require:

- ICT literacy,
- training in digital pedagogy,
- familiarity with software,
- classroom management skills.

4.3.3. Infrastructure Limitations

Some preschools lack:

- reliable internet,
- sufficient devices,
- interactive boards,
- technical support.

4.4. Recommendations for Effective Integration

1. Use **play-based** digital learning.
2. Combine digital tools with **physical manipulatives**.
3. Limit screen exposure to **short, meaningful activities**.
4. Ensure **parent involvement** in technology use.
5. Adapt digital content to local languages and culture.
6. Provide **continuous professional development** for teachers.

5. Conclusion

Modern technologies offer powerful opportunities to transform mathematics education in preschool settings. When used appropriately, digital tools significantly enhance children's numeracy skills, motivation, cognitive development, and readiness for school mathematics. The research demonstrates that interactive games, AR applications, virtual manipulatives, and robotics kits create multisensory, engaging, and effective learning environments aligned with developmental and pedagogical principles.

However, the successful implementation of modern technologies requires careful planning, professional teacher training, and adherence to age-appropriate screen-time guidelines. Preschool institutions should establish a balanced approach where technology complements—rather than replaces—traditional play, direct interaction, and hands-on activities.

Overall, the integration of modern technologies into preschool mathematics lessons holds great promise for building strong early numeracy foundations and preparing children for future educational challenges in a digital age.

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