

AN EDUCATOR'S EXPERIENCE

NATALIA MURODKHODJAEVA



Natalia is an Associate Professor in the Department of Pedagogy at Moscow State Pedagogical University. She is also the scientific supervisor of a project to assess the methodical implementation of research education in preschool children at the State Budget Secondary School No. 2103 in Moscow. She uses a number of LEGO® Education solutions in her work, including Soft Bricks, Build Me “Emotions”, Cafe+ and StoryTales.

Integrating cognitive and physical education

The cognitive education of preschool children is a crucial step on the road to turning them into accomplished and engaged learners. Natalia recognizes the challenge of integrating a variety of educational areas, and is seeking to overcome the challenge by co-authoring a methodology for integrating the physical and cognitive education of preschool children through the use of LEGO Education solutions. This work, jointly conducted with physical training teacher Valentina Polyakova, has already been tried at other state schools in Moscow, and the results published in a work titled: *Growing healthy and intelligent children: a scientific and methodical manual*.

Learning about learners

A firm believer in the need to integrate physical and cognitive learning, Natalia is excited by the benefits that LEGO Education solutions offer to the children. “They enable a complete implementation of the didactic principle of natural conformity – enabling the children to learn about their world through sensory-motor cognition”, she says. “Just as importantly, this involves them with the sensory standards of shape, color, size, volume and fine motor skills. Yet in addition to acquainting children with their visual environment, the solutions also help to establish elementary mathematical forms.”

At the same time, Natalia appreciates the potential of LEGO Education solutions as a research tool in the study of cognitive development, not to mention the wide opportunities it presents for creative interaction with co-evaluators. She says, “This is a modern, complex approach for the object-spatial educational environment, where each piece of equipment enables complex psychological and pedagogical tasks to be solved, through characteristics including mobility, multi-functionality, variability, safety and accessibility.”

Discovering the Aha moment

Natalia has long recognized that LEGO Education solutions help to increase the engagement and concentration shown by preschool children. However, her research also led to the discovery of another important benefit. She says, “When using soft LEGO cubes in a game we invented called ‘Find a Pair’, we noticed that the children would suddenly realize there could be several correct solutions, rather than just the one that they were expecting to find. This is important not just for their cognitive education, but also as a key step on the way to the divergent thinking and confidence that lays the foundations for every person’s success in the modern world.”



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