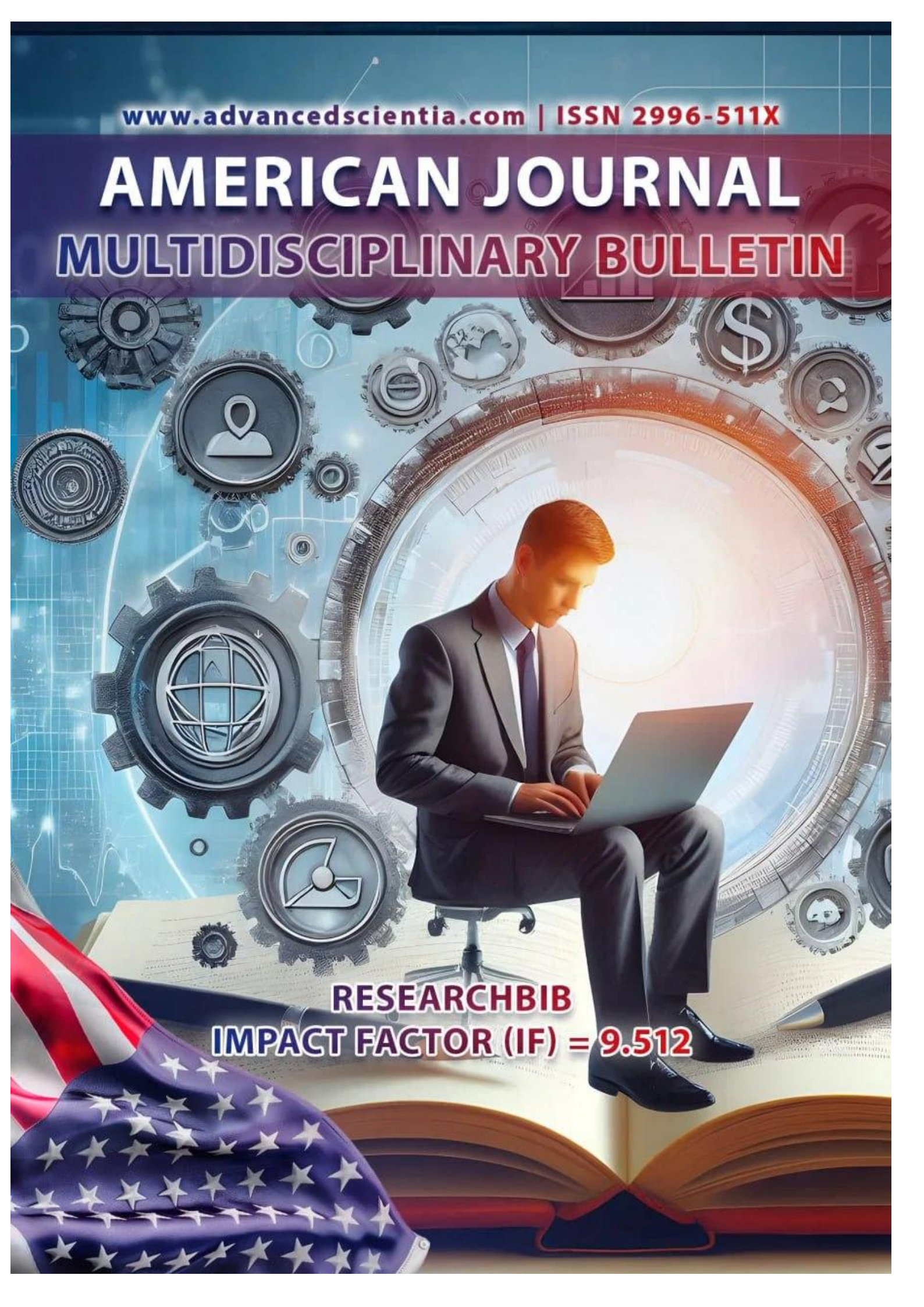


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DIDACTIC POSSIBILITIES OF USING FAIRYTALE THERAPY TECHNOLOGY IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

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Annotation

This article highlights the theoretical and practical aspects of using fairytale therapy technology in preschool educational institutions. The educational, psychological, and social significance of fairy tales is analyzed, and their potential in fostering positive emotions and developing moral qualities in children is discussed.

Keywords

fairytale therapy, preschool education, psychological development, educational technologies, emotional state, fairy tales, child upbringing, pedagogical methodology

Today, one of the urgent priorities of the preschool education system is to ensure the comprehensive development of children, to reveal their creative potential, and to nurture them as emotionally and socially stable individuals. Among modern pedagogical technologies, fairytale therapy—an approach that provides education and upbringing through fairy tales—is recognized as an effective method that engages children's personal experiences, emotions, and imagination. The use of fairytale therapy methods helps to develop and adjust children's communication abilities, thereby creating favorable conditions for their intellectual and personal growth within the family environment. Our experience shows that analyzing and composing fairy tales with children makes it possible to obtain meaningful data for psychodiagnostic purposes.

Fairytale therapy operates at the level of values. It becomes a tale that enables children to remember and rediscover simple yet profound truths. It transforms into a story that fills their hearts with goodness and helps build inner resources to counteract negativity and disorder. Fairytale therapy is not merely a direction; it is a synthesis of achievements in psychology, pedagogy, psychotherapy, and philosophy from various cultures. It is a dynamic and creative process enriched by children's discoveries and interpretations.

A fairy tale lives in the child's consciousness. When a child listens to or pronounces words that create imaginary images, their heart responds emotionally. During various fairytale therapy activities, children acquire a wide range of knowledge: initial concepts about time and space, the relationship between humans and nature, and the child's connection with the objective world. Through fairy tales, a child learns to understand the world not only with the mind but also with the heart. In this process, the child not only learns but also develops an emotional attitude toward events and phenomena in the surrounding world, forming personal judgments about good and evil. As a result, personality correction occurs, emotional and behavioral reactions expand. The first notions of justice and injustice are formed through fairy tales. Fairy tales allow a child to feel bravery and perseverance for the first time. The process of fairytale therapy offers a child an alternative meaning that can be accepted or rejected. It serves as a method for integrating personality, developing creative abilities, expanding consciousness, and improving interaction with the external environment.

Today, non-traditional approaches to working with fairy tales are rapidly developing. *Non-traditional* means not only perceiving content in an unusual way but also creatively changing the direction of the story. It is impossible to predict the full spectrum of a child's reactions to unusual fairy-tale situations and actions. Nor can all the causes that provoke a specific situation be fully described. Therefore, only life experience, professional competence, and intuition allow educators and psychologists to conduct the process of fairytale therapy effectively. However, one fundamental principle must always be observed: do not argue, do not persuade, do not pressure, and do not force the child to listen to a fairy tale. Psychotherapy is often considered a strictly medical field. However, many fail to understand that psychologists do not claim to "treat" anyone. Psychotherapeutic methods (often carefully referred to as *psychocorrection*) are used not for treating psychopathologies but primarily for developmental purposes. For this reason, psychologists increasingly refer to the *psychological model of psychotherapy* to justify the use of such methods. Yet even this model remains insufficiently recognized in schools. Moreover, fairytale therapy itself cannot be classified purely as a clinical psychotherapeutic technique. For example, in the authoritative *Psychotherapeutic Encyclopedia* edited by B.D. Karvasarsky, the term "fairytale therapy" does not appear at all.

So, is it a psychological method? Both yes and no. Fairy tales are used by doctors, psychologists, and educators alike—and each specialist finds resources within the fairy tale that help solve professional tasks. One of the most influential scholars in this field, T.D. Zinkevich-Evstigneeva, describes fairytale therapy as a

system of methods for conveying spiritual knowledge and supporting social realization—a consistent educational system connected with human spiritual nature.

Explaining her concept, she writes that fairytale therapy is both “a process of discovering knowledge that lives within the soul and manifests in the present as therapeutic,” and “a process of searching for meaning, revealing understanding of the world and the system of relationships within it.” It is also “a process of forming links between events in fairy tales and real-life behavior,” “a process of objectifying problematic situations,” “a process of activating personal resources,” and “a process of ecological education and child upbringing.” She describes it as “a special fairytale environment in which a child’s unrealized potentials can emerge and desires can come true,” and also “healing through the environment.” All these elements can indeed be found within the content of fairytale therapy. Yet, such a definition is highly functional and leaves the essence of the method in shadow.

One of the possible methods for guided and purposeful moral development and correction is the fairy tale, which hides profound symbolic meaning beneath its external simplicity. According to P.I. Yanichev, *“Fairy tales contain psychological mechanisms that help a child transition into adulthood.”* A fairy tale educates, warns, teaches, motivates, and even heals. In other words, its potential goes far beyond its artistic and metaphorical value. A fairy tale is one of the most important moral-pedagogical tools for shaping personality.

A.S. Pushkin wrote about fairy tales: *“A fairy tale is a lie, but it contains a hint, a lesson for good people.”* Good and evil characters live in the world of fairy tales, interact with one another, yet they never directly tell the child “do this” or “do not do that.” The child intuitively empathizes with the beloved characters and begins to understand the difference between good and evil. Thus, the fairy tale affects the child’s unconscious and, willingly or not, teaches noble feelings.

Fairytale therapist A.V. Gnezdilov defines the subject of fairytale therapy as *“nurturing a child’s inner world, developing the heart, increasing awareness of events, and gaining knowledge about life patterns and ways of expressing creative energy in society.”* He also emphasizes that fairytale therapy is a process through which adolescents and adults “remember and restore a harmonious worldview.” Without disputing the views of well-known scholars, I would like to express my own interpretation. First, however, consider a short fairy tale invented by a small child: One day, the rabbit asked the fox: “Why are you so cunning and cruel, always trying to catch us rabbits? Why don’t you become kind, timid, and calm like us?” The fox thought and tried to become kinder, timid, and quiet. And suddenly its ears began to grow.

In this simple and symbolic way, the child expressed a profound truth: everyone should remain true to their nature.

Fairytale therapy is a branch of applied psychology that uses the metaphorical resources of fairy tales to enhance self-awareness and build special levels of interpersonal interaction, creating conditions for the formation of subjectivity. This may sound abstract, but in fairytale therapy, the primary tool of psychological influence is *metaphor*, which forms the core of any fairy tale. The depth and clarity of the metaphor determine the effectiveness of therapeutic methods used with both children and adults. Thus, fairytale therapy can rightfully be considered a psychological method, primarily because it serves psychological goals – developing self-awareness and establishing higher-quality interpersonal interactions. Yet this raises two questions:

- (1) Is there sufficient reason to consider these the main goals of fairytale therapy?
- (2) Why can fairytale therapy become one of the most important tools in the work of a preschool psychologist?

There are additional arguments supporting not only the legitimacy but also the necessity of applying fairytale therapy in preschool educational settings. Modern psychological concepts increasingly emphasize the diverse levels of human subjectivity and regard these as fundamental to human life. In the pedagogical process, subject–subject interaction plays a particularly important role because the educational environment naturally creates situations requiring the educator to build such relationships deliberately. The construction of subject–subject relations between teacher and child largely determines the effectiveness of pedagogical work...

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