CZU: 159.955.5:37.015.3 **https://doi.org/10.59295/sum9(176)2024_37**

SCHOOL AS A SPACE FOR CREATIVE THINKING

Svetlana TOLSTAIA,
Moldova State University

Creative thinking is considered to be one of the key skills of the 21st century. The problem of developing creative abilities of schoolchildren is the basis, the foundation of the learning process, is an ‘eternal’ pedagogical problem, which does not lose its relevance over time, requiring constant, close attention and further development. The article presents a theoretical review of the problem of creativity, describes the goals and pedagogical conditions of creativity development in schoolchildren, suggests some directions of modernisation of the educational process and curriculum in order to create conditions for the development of creative thinking.

Keywords*: creativity, creative thinking, school, students, creative thinking development.*

ȘCOALA CA SPAȚIU PENTRU GÂNDIRE CREATIVĂ

Gândirea creativă este considerată a fi una dintre competențele-cheie ale secolului XXI. Problema dezvoltării abilităților creative ale elevilor este baza, fundamentul procesului de învățare, este o problemă pedagogică „eternă”, care nu își pierde relevanța în timp, necesitând o atenție constantă, atentă și o dezvoltare ulterioară. Articolul prezintă o trecere în revistă teoretică a problemei creativității, descrie obiectivele și condițiile pedagogice ale dezvoltării creativității la școlari, propune câteva direcții de modernizare a procesului educațional și curicula predatăpentru a crea condiții de dezvoltare a gândirii creative.

Cuvinte-cheie*: creativitate, gândire creativă, școală, elevi, dezvoltarea gândirii creative*.

Introduction

Today’s society is particularly in need of people who are enterprising, creative, ready to find new approaches to solving urgent socio-economic and cultural problems, able to live in a new democratic society and be useful to this society.

In this regard, the problem of developing creative thinking and creative activity of an individual is of particular relevance today. Creative individuals have always determined the progress of civilisation, creating material and spiritual values that are notable for their novelty, non-template, helping people to see the unusual in seemingly ordinary phenomena. But today the educational process is faced with the task of educating a creative personality, starting from primary school. This task is reflected in alternative educational programmes and innovative processes taking place in modern schools.

Creative thinking is a component of functional literacy, which is understood as a person’s ability to use his/her imagination to develop and improve ideas, form new knowledge, and solve problems he/she has not encountered before. According to PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) [19], creative thinking is also the ability to think critically and improve one’s designs.

Creative thinking plays a huge role in human life. It is a factor that is necessary for creating something new, because all modern inventions are the result of a non-standard approach to familiar things. Creative approach helps to react faster to tasks, skilfully get out of difficult situations, live out of the template and generate cool ideas. People with creative thinking are able to think outside the box and find unconventional solutions to standard situations.

Conceptual base

The modern system of general education does not pay due attention to the development of creative thinking in schoolchildren: the emphasis is placed on logic, as well as on mastering knowledge in a number of exact and humanitarian disciplines [13]. The small number of hours devoted to fine arts, music and choreography in modern schools is not enough for children to develop their potential on a large scale. It is not surprising that

many parents are interested in various methods of developing their child's creative thinking, as this can give them a significant advantage over their peers and lay the foundation for their future speciality.

Education today is aimed not only at equipping students with a system of knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for the implementation of the school curriculum, but also at the development of their creative abilities and capabilities, the formation of readiness for creative problem solving.

The social order for a creative personality cannot be successfully implemented without modernising the school learning process. Its reorganisation presupposes, first of all, the focus of teachers' efforts on the development of students' memory, thinking, imagination, systematisation of knowledge and skills of creative activity, improvement of properties and qualities of their personality, providing them with the ability to find their own way out of non-standard situations. A creative approach to the implementation of the school programme is one of the important indicators of their learning ability [9, 13]. In connection with the need of society in creative schoolchildren and its fulfilment, there is a need to study the main characteristics of a creative personality and the conditions of their formation by means of the educational process of school. Such characteristics are creativity, creative activity and creative potential of a personality.

Therefore, today in pedagogical science and practice there is an intensive search for new, non-standard forms, methods and techniques of teaching. Non-traditional types of lessons, problem-based teaching methods, collective creative activities in extracurricular activities that promote the development of creative activity of junior schoolchildren are widespread.

As mentioned by Professor Ig. Racu [6], creativity as a mechanism of productive activity, aimed at stimulating the development of creative personality of schoolchildren, involves clarifying its essence and identifying the main characteristics of this complex personal education.

The analysis of scientific literature allows us to talk about the ambiguity of approaches to this issue. In the 60s of the XX century, the impetus for the identification of creative thinking was the information about the lack of connection between intelligence and the success of solving problem situations. It was found that the latter depends on the ability to use the information given in the tasks at a fast pace in different ways. This type of thinking [1, 2, 16, 18] was called creativity and began to study it independently of intelligence - as thinking associated with the creation or discovery of something new.

To determine the level of creativity, J. Guilford identified 16 hypothetical intellectual abilities that characterise creativity [16].

Among them:

1. fluency of thought - the number of ideas arising per unit of time;
2. flexibility of thought - the ability to switch from one idea to another;
3. originality - the ability to produce ideas that differ from conventional views;
4. curiosity - sensitivity to problems in the world around us;
5. ability to develop a hypothesis;
6. irreality - logical independence of the reaction from the stimulus;
7. fantasy - complete detachment of the response from reality in the presence of a logical connection between the stimulus and the response;
8. problem-solving ability, i.e. the ability to analyse and synthesise;
9. the ability to improve an object by adding details;
10. and so on.

E. Torrance identifies four main parameters that characterise creativity: ease - the speed of performing textual tasks; flexibility - the number of switches from one class of objects to another during the answers; originality - the minimum frequency of a given answer to a homogeneous group; accuracy of task fulfilment [18].

The author of the methodology of creativity development, teacher О. Г. Захарова [10] considers creativity as the ability to think outside the box, the ability to produce unexpectedly new solutions. She considers creativity from the point of view of the ability to work with stereotypes of perception, thinking, and activity. In her opinion, every culture is based on stereotypes. The more variants of reaction a person has, the more stereotypes he has accumulated - the easier it is for him, the more of them he can use. If the psyche is plastic

and can choose a variant of behaviour adequate to a particular situation and, if necessary, develop a new one, because none of the proposed ones suited the situation, then this plasticity is creativity.

В. Д. Шадриков in his monograph Mental Development of Man writes that ‘creativity is an attitude, attitude of a person, expressed in highlighting the problem in a new light, freedom from stereotypes, openness and aspiration to non-trivial solutions’ [14, p. 32].

Among the most promising directions of studying the phenomenon of creativity at the present time stand out the studies of Д.Б. Богоявленская, who defines human creative activity as a certain mental structure inherent in the creative type of personality. Д.Б. Богоявленская considers creativity as a peculiarity of intelligence or level of thinking, as a qualitative definition of the highest level of intellectual activity. Speaking about the sources and conditions of creativity development, she characterises it as a socially conditioned phenomenon that develops in activity [8].

Creativity is based on a set of natural gifts, reserves, aptitudes and abilities, which act as prerequisites for the formation of the creative potential of the individual, the manifestation of its creative activity and readiness for creative activity.

A. Maslow [12] distinguishes two levels in creativity - primary and secondary. The primary level is involuntary creativity associated with insight. The secondary level is arbitrary, associated with hard work, long training.

Researcher Н. М. Гнатко [9] distinguishes two levels of creativity: potential and actual. From his point of view, potential creativity is pre-activity creativity, which defines the personality in terms of its readiness to acquire actual creativity, to display creative activity.

The aim of creativity development is to create prerequisites for self-realisation of pupils in creative learning process and later in independent activity. The essence of this process is to awaken the natural forces of a schoolchild from curiosity to self-realisation, which is manifested in the development of his/her creative potential and creative activity. Creativity acts as a basis, a starting point for the formation of a schoolchild’s creative potential.

According to E. Torrance [18], creativity includes increased sensitivity to problems, to deficiency or contradiction of knowledge, actions to define these problems, to search for their solutions on the basis of hypotheses, to test and change hypotheses, to formulate the result of the solution.

Creativity is the key to the future. All progress is the result of finding new, often unexpected, more effective, simpler and faster methods of solving any problems [13]. And this requires continuous improvement of creative skills.

Therefore, today the issue of developing creative thinking in the younger generation is acute. Without realising the laws of didactic influence on the personality, without the development of creative thought, full perception of the world, it is difficult to bring up a harmoniously developed personality.

Analysing trends in the development of new ideas.

The process of creativity development will be successful if the system-forming basis of the school educational process is a model based on systemic and holistic approaches to the accumulation of students’ experience of creative activity, providing for the principles and methods of creative learning [5, 13, 17].

The attitude in educational work to novelty and non-standard approach in solving educational tasks carry the main pedagogical load, aiming pupils at creative actions and attitudes [5]. A specific feature of the learning process aimed at developing creativity is the free choice of actions, the need for novelty and creative self-realisation.

Satisfaction of students’ need for creative self-realisation is possible in active creative activity, involving interaction, cooperation and co-creation of students and teachers in solving learning tasks [17], taking into account individual capabilities and creative abilities, experience of their creative work.

The orientation of the educational process on the personality of a schoolchild, the formation of his/her creative characteristics breaks the established canons of its organization [17]. Traditional teaching as a unity of prescriptions for students and teachers of the curriculum and standard assessments of students’ learning achievements have a negative impact on the development of creativity, which makes it necessary to restructure the traditional practice of the educational process.

The main directions of its modernisation should be considered to be:

- creation of a healthy psychological climate, trust in the system of relations 'teacher - schoolchild', ensuring co-operation and co-creativity in solving learning problems [1]
- actualisation of the teacher's own creative potential [2];
- teacher's mastery of methods of diagnosing figurative and verbal creativity, types of thinking, creative thinking, interests and aptitudes of students [4];
- actualisation of positive learning motivation and attitudes to a creative approach to the performance of learning tasks, development of creative personal attitudes in pupils, the need for creative self-realisation [27];
- use of technologies of creative work: application of active forms (presentation, demonstration, report, composing a virtual computer work, dramatisation) and methods (project method, frames, brainstorming, heuristic methods of problem solving) of lessons [15];
- gaining experience of creative activity through free and self-initiated, personally involved, personally meaningful teaching, providing freedom of choice of tasks and ways of their fulfilment, creating a situation of success for each pupil [4];
- organisation of work on independent developments, individual and group projects (project activities) [2];
- providing conditions at the lesson, in particular, dividing the lesson time into active and relaxation periods, which will give pupils an opportunity to reflect on the question posed [3];
- use of the potential of extracurricular activities in all subjects, through the realisation of the opportunity to satisfy the cognitive interest of pupils on the basis of an in-depth entry into the world of knowledge from the natural sciences, humanities and arts in an atmosphere of co-creation, equal cooperation between pupils, teachers and parents; through the voluntary choice of an individual educational route and the pace of its development in the conditions of different-age groups [9];
- liaising with the parents of pupils through joint classes on topics of industrial orientation [7].

In the process of education it is important not so much to change the content, forms and methods of teaching, as to establish and consolidate personal attitudes that stimulate creative actions of pupils, their constant creative growth, development of the ability to originality and creative constructiveness of pupils' thoughts. It is necessary to teach pupils to think independently, to show initiative and creative activity, to act inventively and unconventionally.

Positive results of the educational process can be said only if a healthy psychological atmosphere, nurturing and developing educational environment is created at school. И. Я. Лернер [11] believes that the development of students' personality directly depends on a certain moral and emotional climate at lessons. According to the scientist, the decisive role in this is played by the position of the teacher himself, his creative enthusiasm, benevolence, and the atmosphere of freedom of thought and self-expression he creates.

Conclusions

Students should learn to perceive new things, develop their creative thinking, ability to act creatively, opening new horizons of cognition and creativity. The use of didactic technologies and methods of creative work in the educational process stimulates the need for constant renewal and change of students' worldview. The combination of the educational process with scientific research is an important condition for the development of creativity and the formation of creative potential of the schoolchildren.

Skilful application of methods and techniques that ensure high activity in educational cognition is a means of developing creative abilities of students.

So, for creativity it is not necessary to find additional time and, especially, special classes. Creativity should permeate the whole lesson, everything that is done at the lesson. Compulsory components of the lesson should be supplemented with creativity.

Thus, creative thinking is defined as the process of reception, semantic processing, preservation of received knowledge and its application in new situations, when solving practical and theoretical problems, i.e. this knowledge is used in the form of skills and new, original problems are solved on their basis.

References:

1. AGACHI, E. *Metode active de valorificare a potențialului creativ al elevului.* În: *Învățătorul modern*, 2012, nr. 6(22), p. 16-18. ISSN: 1857-2820.
2. BĂRĂNCEAN, S. *Dezvoltarea potenţialului creativ şi a gândirii critice*. București: Univers Pedagogic, 2011, 32 p. ISBN 978-9975-159-95-1.
3. BOIANGIU, D. *Modalităţii de valorificare şi stimulare a creativităţii*. În: *Învăţătorul modern*, 2012, nr. 3(19), p. 75-77. ISSN: 1857-2820.
4. FURDUI, E. *Metode cu valenţe activizatoare în planul creativităţii.* În: *Tehnologii didactice moderne*. Materialele Simpozionului Pedagogic Internaţional 26-27 mai 2016. Chişinău, IŞE (Tipogr. „Cavaioli”), 2016, p. 492-496.
5. GUŢU, V.; ROTARU, R. E. *Creativitatea şi potenţialul creativ în educaţie.* In: *Cadrul didactic – promotor al politicilor educaționale*, Ed. 1, 11-12 octombrie 2019, Chișinău. Chișinău, Republica Moldova: Institutul de Ştiinţe ale Educaţiei, 2019, pp. 37-41. ISBN 978-9975-48-156-4.
6. RACU, Ig. *Creativitatea la vârsta şcolară mică*. În: *Psihologie. Pedagogie specială. Asistenţă socială*, 2012, nr. 2 (27), p. 37- 46. ISSN: 1857-0224.
7. ŢĂPURIN, A. *Relația dintre competențele parentale și manifestarea creativității preșcolarilor.* În: *Demersuri creative*, Nr. 10, 2017, p.11-19. ISSN: L-2501-0921.
8. БОГОЯВЛЕНСКАЯ, Д. Б. *Психология творческих способностей*. Москва: Академия, 2002, 320 с. ISBN 5-7695-0888-4.
9. ГНАТКО, Н. М. *Проблема креативности и явление подражания*. М.: ИП РАН, 1994, 43 с.
10. ЗАХАРОВА, О. Г. *Определение понятия «креативность» в научной литературе.* В: *Аспекты и тенденции педагогической науки*: материалы II Междунар. науч. конф. Санкт-Петербург, июль 2017 г. Санкт-Петербург: Свое издательство, 2017, с. 15-17.
11. ЛЕРНЕР, И. Я. *Философия дидактики и дидактика как философия*. М.: Издательство РОУ 1995. 44 с.
12. МАСЛОУ, А. *Новые рубежи человеческой природы*. М.: Смысл, 1999, 425 с. ISBN: 978-5-9614-2297-9.
13. РЯХИМОВА, Е. Г. *Развитие творческих способностей обучающихся в условиях технологического образования.* В: *Научные исследования и разработки. Социально-гуманитарные исследования и технологии*, 2020, с. 31-34. ISSN: 2306-1731.
14. ШАДРИКОВ, В. Д. *Ментальное развитие человека*. М.: Аспект Пресс, 2007, 327 с. ISBN: 978-5-7567-0466-2.
15. GLĂVEANU, V. P. *Creativity in Heterogeneous Groups: The Shared Representational Resources Model*. În: *Revista de psihologie organizaţională*. 2010, nr. 1-4, p. 25-38. ISSN 1582-5906.
16. GUILFORD, J. P.; HOEPFNER, R. *The Analysis of intelligence*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Co. 1971.
17. SNYDER, R. F. *The relationship between learning styles / multiple intelligences and academic achievement of high school students*. In: *The High School Journal*, 2000, 83(2), pp. 11-20. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40364506
18. TORRANCE, E. P. *Understanding creativity: where to start?* Psychological inquiry, 1993, vol. 4, № 3, pp. 232-234.
19. https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa/
20. http://www.prodidactica.md/revista/Revista_107.pdf

** This article is made within the project „Theory and Methodology of Continuous and Cyclical Monitoring and Development of School Curriculum”.*

Author data:
Svetlana TOLSTAIA, PhD, Professor universitar, Moldova State University.
ORCID: 0000-0002-0985-6142
E-mail: tolstaiasv@gmail.com

Presented on 15.08.2024