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STUDYING THE ISSUE OF FORMING CREATIVITY OF OLDER PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTRES

Abstract. *The article deals with the issue of forming creativity of older preschool children in child development centres.*

The theoretical and methodological foundations for forming creativity of older preschool children in child development centres are presented. The author clarifies the essence of the concept "creativity of older preschool children" as a special personal ability to generate unusual ideas, deviate from traditional patterns of thinking, and quickly solve problem situations, which entails a desire to reason, verbally combine ideas, express possible solutions, and demonstrate the child's transformative activity.

The components (cognitive, emotional-value, practical-activity), criteria, and indicators of the formation of creativity of older preschool children have been defined: generation of hypotheses and ideas to solve tasks (understanding the problem; ingenuity and speed in finding new ways and options for solving it; knowledge of conventional problem-solving approaches; ability to analyze and synthesize); desire and inspiration in solving tasks (motivation to demonstrate creativity; interest in the unknown; engagement in problem-solving; need to defend one's opinion); application of diverse strategies in problem-solving (the ability to construct a solution algorithm; propose various ideas in unstructured situations; verbally combine and express possible solutions; defend one's opinion and accept others' views; improve and create new forms or objects based on existing ones).

The levels of the formation of creativity (high, medium, low) of older preschool children have been characterized.

Pedagogical conditions (creating a developmental environment that fosters creativity; directing the content of children's practical activities toward developing their creativity (by incorporating creative tasks into the educational process); and enhancing the competence of both educators and parents in forming the creativity of older preschool children), and a methodology for the formation of creativity of older preschool children in child development centers has been substantiated.

The conducted study does not cover the multifaceted theoretical and practical exploration of this problem. Further research may focus on identifying effective forms and methods for forming creativity of older preschool children and other age-related groups.

Keywords: *creativity, components, criteria, indicators, and levels of the formation of creativity, older preschool age, child development centres, pedagogical conditions.*

Introduction. Building a democratic society in Ukraine highlights the need to develop individuals' creative potential and to create conditions for the formation of children's creativity. These ideas are reflected in educational legislation, including the Laws of Ukraine "On Education" [18], "On Preschool Education" [19], "On Out-of-School Education" [20], as well as in the concept of the "New Ukrainian School" [22]. They emphasize that the country's future largely depends on the creative initiative of every Ukrainian.

In this context, one of the key tasks in implementing a person-centered model of preschool education across institutions of various types and ownership models is forming the creativity of older preschool children in line with their age-related capabilities.

The issue of forming creativity of pre-schooler children is particularly relevant, as older preschool age is characterized by improved orientation in the surrounding environment (children more effectively distinguish objects and establish simple temporal, spatial, and functional relationships between them); a deeper understanding of the material world; the development of logical thinking and the acquisition of basic mathematical relationships; as well as an emerging desire for reflection and the use of verbal means for argumentation.

Child development centres play an essential role in revealing the creative potential of preschool children. An important mission of these educational institutions is to prepare children for school. This preparation is effectively carried out through activities specific to early childhood (such as play and musical activities) while taking into account each child's individual and age-specific characteristics.

The pedagogical issues of the creative development of preschool children have been reflected in the scholarly contributions of contemporary Ukrainian researchers, including A. Anyschuk [8], L. Berezovska [11; 12], H. Bielienka [13], I. Bekh [14], A. Bohush [12], N. Havrysh [15], T. Zhytnyk [17], O. Kononko [21], I. Onyshchuk [23], T. Pyrozhenko [24], V. Ragozina [25].

Aim and tasks. The purpose of the article is to define and substantiate the theoretical and methodological foundations for forming creativity of older preschool children in child development centres.

The objectives of the article are as follows: 1) to clarify the essence of the concept of "creativity in older preschool children"; 2) to identify the components, criteria, indicators, and levels of formation of creativity of older preschool children; 3) to substantiate the pedagogical conditions and methodology for forming creativity of older preschool children in child development centres.

Research methods. To achieve the purpose and accomplish the objectives of the study, a set of research methods were used: *theoretical methods* – analysis, comparison, classification, synthesis, and generalization – were used to clarify the essence of the concept of "creativity of older preschool children"; to determine the components, criteria, indicators, and levels of the formation of creativity of older preschoolers; and to characterize the pedagogical conditions for forming creativity of older preschool children in child development centres; *empirical methods* – observations, interviews, and surveys – were applied to examine the state of the problem in the educational process of child development canters; the ascertaining and formative stages of the

experiment were conducted to test the effectiveness of the pedagogical conditions as well as the content and methodological support for forming creativity of older preschool children in child development canters.

Research results. The leading idea of the research is that the creativity of older preschool children is a distinct personal ability to generate original ideas, deviate from traditional thinking patterns, and solve problems quickly. It determines their inclination to reflect, to verbally combine, to propose alternative solutions, and to demonstrate transformative activity.

The key characteristics of older preschool children that are essential for their mental development include:

1. Active exploration of the world: children begin to navigate their environment more confidently (living/non-living nature, the social world); they become aware of various relationships (temporal, spatial, and cause-and-effect), including understanding the dependence of an object's function on its structure and material.

2. Development of thinking and speech: there is intensive growth of logical thinking, acquisition of basic mathematical concepts, and active use of speech for reasoning.

The effectiveness of developing the creativity of older preschool children depends on their individual psychological characteristics.

The specific conditions for forming creativity of older preschool children in child development centres include: individualized, variable programmes; an appropriately enriched material and informational environment; a favourable, positive emotional and psychological climate; and alignment with the psychophysiological characteristics of the preschool age.

The structure of the concept "creativity of older preschool children" consists of three core components: *cognitive* (understanding by older preschool children of conventional ways of solving a problem); *emotional-value* (interest and engagement in resolving problem situations); *practical-activity* (manifested in the ability to deviate from a model or pattern when solving problem situations) [7].

According to the identified components, the criteria for the formation of creativity of older preschool children and their indicators were defined as follows: *generation of hypotheses and ideas aimed at solving assigned tasks* (indicators: understanding the essence of the problem; ingenuity and speed in finding new methods and alternative solutions; knowledge of conventional ways of completing tasks; ability to analyse and synthesise); *desire and motivation to solve assigned tasks* (indicators: willingness to demonstrate creativity; interest in the unknown; engagement in addressing problem-based questions; need to express and defend one's own opinion); *application of diverse strategies when solving problems* (indicators: ability to construct an algorithm for solving a task; ability to propose diverse ideas in an unregulated situation; capacity for verbal combinations

and for expressing various solutions; ability to defend one's viewpoint while accepting another's; ability to improve, modify, and create new forms or objects based on existing ones) [10].

To examine the levels of the formation of the creativity of older preschool children, the following methods and techniques were used: interviews, surveys, and observations; a scale for assessing manifestations of a child's creativity (used to compare teachers' opinions with the results of diagnostic techniques); the "Creating Pictures" technique (to assess the cognitive component); Renzulli's Creativity Checklist (to evaluate the emotional-value component); and a battery of subtests designed to identify the level of creativity, including "Use of Objects", "Consequences of a Situation", "Words", "Verbal Association", "Picture Arrangement", "Sketches", and "Hidden Form" (to assess the practical-activity component).

The results of the ascertaining stage of the experiment indicated that older preschool children predominantly have low levels of the formation of creativity (41.7%).

Children with a low level of the formation of creativity are characterized by difficulties with verbal expression. They arrive at answers only with prompts during task completion, do not understand the significance of conventional methods for solving problem situations, and show little interest in creating original, useful objects or in understanding the essence of a problem. They demonstrate a low ability to defend their own opinions or accept others' views, consider it unnecessary to seek new problem-solving approaches, and prefer activities that follow a concrete, predefined algorithm.

A medium level of creativity development was observed in 35.5% of older preschool children. These children require some time to find an answer when solving a task; they know a method for solving the problem, but are unable to verbalize it clearly and are restrained in their expressions. They have limited knowledge of conventional problem-solving approaches but are interested in learning more. They prioritize the object's originality over its practical usefulness. These children demonstrate a passive interest in problem-solving, with their internal motivation being more pronounced than external motivation. Problem analysis and hypothesis generation occur with assistance and prompts. They do not show initiative in solving previously unknown problems, adhere to conventional methods of task completion, but are willing to consider others' opinions.

Only 22.8% of older preschool children have a high level of the formation creativity. These children demonstrate the ability to combine ideas and invent solutions verbally; they can express and formulate alternative ways of solving problems. They possess a high level of knowledge about conventional problem-solving approaches, exhibit well-developed divergent thinking and imagination, and show strong motivation for creative activity. In every case, they invent new ways to solve tasks and derive satisfaction from the process. They are interested in work that requires

analysis, synthesis, testing of hypotheses, and generating original solutions. These children enjoy combining, restructuring, and improving already known objects [9].

It has been established that adults (educators and parents) play a significant role in developing children's creativity. However, the survey results indicated that teachers do not pay sufficient attention to children's needs for self-expression and the development of their creativity as a fundamental personal quality.

The pedagogical conditions for forming the creativity of older preschool children in child development centres have been substantiated. These include: creating a developmental environment that fosters creativity; directing the content of children's practical activities toward developing their creativity (by incorporating creative tasks into the educational process); and enhancing the competence of both educators and parents in forming the creativity of older preschool children.

Content and methodological support for forming the creativity of older preschool children has been developed, consisting of a Program for the Formation of Creativity of Older Preschool Children and methodological recommendations for educators and parents, presented in the manuals "Forming Creativity of Older Preschool Children" and "Adults in Educating a Creative Child: A Guide for Parents". The program includes developmental exercises, games, and creative tasks.

A methodology that incorporates a set of creative tasks and is divided into two stages was introduced into the educational process at child development centres. In the first stage, children learned to classify objects in the material world by specific attributes, to systematize objects, to identify features of an object, to interpret its meaning, to perceive quantitative and qualitative characteristics, and to recognize an object as a combination of conflicting features or values. This work was carried out through a system of creative tasks based on dichotomous methods, as well as systematic and dialectical approaches.

In the second stage, older preschool children mastered methods for transforming objects or situations. Pedagogical tasks included developing children's ability to generate ideas on a given topic; evaluate and elaborate on the most successful ideas; link arbitrarily chosen characters and their actions into a coherent storyline; select atypical properties for an object; change perspectives on an object, its features, and the significance of those features; and apply methods of fantastical transformation to both the object itself and its attributes. These tasks were addressed through brainstorming.

In the experimental group, classes were conducted using play-based activities grounded in a synthesis of the arts, including visual, musical, and theatrical activities. Imagination-developing games were widely used, including journey-themed lessons, painting, clay modelling, and appliqué activities. The play-based method provided extensive opportunities for educators' initiative and

creativity, offering space for fantasy and imagination, as well as for the exploration and use of game forms and motifs to foster children's creativity.

All tasks were developed based on their difficulty and the child's existing level of creativity. Methodological recommendations for conducting each lesson were also created for educators.

The classes have produced significant results. Firstly, preschool children's cognitive functions have improved, including increased attention span and memory capacity. Secondly, children more frequently apply their imagination independently to other tasks and provide non-standard (creative) responses to questions. As a result, creativity manifests more effectively when favourable psycho-pedagogical conditions are provided, when children are active participants in the lesson, not only listening, memorizing, and following the teacher's instructions, but also actively creating, modifying, and enhancing the play-based situation [16].

The study revealed considerable potential of child development centres in forming the creativity of older preschool children. However, the systematic development of this potential requires coordinated, purposeful efforts from all participants in the educational process.

Discussion. The issue of forming creativity has received extensive attention in the research of foreign scholars.

According to J. Guilford, creativity consists of several key parameters: a) the ability to formulate a problem (the ability to perceive and define a task); b) fluency (generation of a large number of ideas); d) flexibility (producing diverse ideas and changing approaches); d) originality (providing non-standard, unique responses to stimuli); e) problem-solving ability (using analysis and synthesis to find solutions) [3].

Based on these parameters, J. Guilford developed tests primarily aimed at studying divergent productivity, that is, the ability to find multiple possible solutions to a single problem.

The concept of creativity was further developed by E. Torrance, who defined it as the ability to perceive deficiencies abstractly. He argued that the creative process consists of several stages: perceiving the problem, searching for solutions, formulating and testing hypotheses, modifying them, and ultimately achieving a result. The main parameters identified by Torrance included fluency, flexibility, elaboration, and originality.

E. Torrance defined creativity as a process whose key components include sensitivity to problems, awareness of knowledge gaps, and perception of disharmony. The creative act involves identifying problems, searching for alternative solutions, formulating, testing, and modifying hypotheses, and generalizing the results.

Torrance's research refuted the notion that creativity is genetically predetermined, emphasizing its dependence on the socio-cultural environment. Experimental evidence confirmed that creative abilities can be effectively developed through specialized instruction [6].

J. Renzulli's [5] approach to understanding creativity aligns with previous concepts. He defines creativity as a set of an individual's behavioural characteristics, manifested in original ways of producing results, the ability to solve problems effectively, and the capacity to apply unconventional approaches to analyzing issues from multiple perspectives.

M. Vallach and N. Kogan [7] critically re-evaluated the approaches of J. Guilford, E. Torrance, and their followers. They rejected the criterion of "accuracy" as essential for creativity and also dismissed strict time constraints, competitive environments, and the notion of a single correct answer.

This alternative approach altered the understanding of the relationship between creativity and intelligence. The researchers argued that these qualities are interconnected not merely as separate traits, but as integral parts of a holistic cognitive process.

The concept of creativity was further developed within the investment theory proposed by R. Sternberg. According to his theory, a creative individual is someone who works with innovative, unconventional ideas and can adequately assess their potential and prospects for commercialization or implementation.

R. Sternberg identified six key factors that determine creative activity: intelligence, knowledge, thinking style, personality traits, motivation, and the external environment [6].

A. Maslow [4], in his reflections on creativity, emphasizes improvisation and inspiration. He viewed creativity as a two-stage process: inspiration, followed by elaboration, which gives the creative idea a concrete, tangible form. Maslow considered creativity to be a natural characteristic of an individual, closely linked to the drive for self-actualization as the full realization of one's talents, abilities, and potential. He maintained that every person is potentially creative.

In his research, A. Maslow distinguishes between primary and secondary creativity. Primary creativity refers to the stage of inspiration and intuitive insight (the inspirational phase). Secondary creativity involves elaboration and giving the idea a concrete form. Maslow considered secondary creativity less significant for studying the nature of creativity, as it is more associated with routine work, diligence, patience, and perseverance. He emphasized the initial (inspirational) stage of creativity, when a person becomes fully immersed in the present moment of inspiration, forgetting about the past and the future.

A. Maslow highlights the ability of individuals, particularly those with a high level of creativity, to integrate primary and secondary processes (conscious and unconscious). The result of this integration is a mutual enrichment of these processes and a transformation of their course. Creativity based on the profound utilization of both types of processes was termed by him "integrated creativity". However, Maslow emphasized that the defining feature of creative self-

actualization remains its expressiveness, or being, rather than a pragmatic focus on problem-solving or producing a specific outcome.

Summarizing the research on creativity conducted by their predecessors, F. Barron and D. Harrington [2] defined "creativity" as the ability to adaptively respond to the need for new approaches and novel creative products. Creativity also enables the recognition of novelty in the world, though the process may be conscious or unconscious. The creation of a new product largely depends on the creator's personality and the strength of their intrinsic motivation. Specific characteristics of the creative process, the product, and the individual include originality, capability, validity, task appropriateness, and another attribute that can be termed suitability – an aesthetic, ecological, optimal form that is correct and original at a given moment. Creative products can vary widely in origin: a new solution to a mathematical problem, the discovery of a chemical process, the creation of music, a painting, a poem, the development of a new philosophical or religious system, an innovation in law, a novel solution to social problems, etc.

Analysis of research by foreign scholars on the development of creativity indicates that the methodological foundation for most studies of children's creativity is provided by J. Guilford's theory of creative intelligence and its followers. The core idea of this theory is to use factor analysis to identify distinct, universal factors of creativity. These factors, common to both children and adults, characterize different forms of productive human activity.

Conclusion. The theoretical and methodological foundations for forming creativity of older preschool children in child development centres include: defining the essence of the concept of "creativity in older preschool children"; identifying the components, criteria, and indicators of the formation of creativity; and establishing the pedagogical conditions and methodology for forming creativity of older preschool children within these centres.

The summary of the indicators of the formation of creativity of older preschool children of the experimental group (EG) after the formative stage of the experiment demonstrated positive dynamics: the number of children with a high level of creativity increased by 13.0%, those with a medium level increased by 3.9%, and those with a low level decreased by 16.9%.

A comparative analysis of the levels of the formation of creativity of older preschool children in the control and experimental groups, before and after the experiment, according to the defined criteria, confirmed the effectiveness of the developed pedagogical conditions, as well as content and methodological support for fostering creativity in child development centres. In particular, children in the experimental group have improved understanding of conventional problem-solving approaches, increased interest in resolving problem situations, the ability to deviate from standard problem-solving patterns, and a higher level of transformative activity.

The stable positive trend in increasing the formation of creativity among older preschool children indicates the pedagogical appropriateness and effectiveness of the substantiated pedagogical conditions and methodology for forming creativity in child development centres.

The conducted study does not cover the multifaceted theoretical and practical exploration of this problem. Further research may focus on identifying effective forms and methods for forming creativity of older preschool children and other age-related groups.

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ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ ПРОБЛЕМИ ФОРМУВАННЯ У СТАРШИХ ДОШКІЛЬНИКІВ КРЕАТИВНОСТІ В ЦЕНТРАХ РОЗВИТКУ ДИТИНИ

Анотація. *У статті розкрито теоретико-методичні основи формування у старших дошкільників креативності в центрах розвитку дитини.*

Авторкою уточнено сутність поняття «креативність дітей старшого дошкільного віку» як особлива здатність особистості породжувати незвичайні ідеї, відхилятися у мисленні від традиційних схем, швидко розв'язувати проблемні ситуації, що обумовлює прагнення розмірковувати, вербально комбінувати, висловлювати варіанти вирішення проблеми; виявлення перетворювальної активності дитини.

Визначено компоненти (когнітивний, емоційно-ціннісний, практично-діяльнісний), критерії та показники сформованості креативності старших дошкільників: продукування гіпотез та ідей з метою вирішення поставлених завдань (розуміння сутності проблеми; кмітливість та швидкість знаходження нових способів та варіантів її вирішення; знання загальноприйнятих способів вирішення завдань; здатність до аналізу та синтезу); бажання і натхнення у вирішенні поставлених завдань (прагнення проявляти креативність; інтерес до невідомого; зацікавленість у вирішенні проблемних питань; потреба у відстоюванні своєї думки); застосування різноманітних стратегій при вирішенні проблем (вміння вибудовувати алгоритм вирішення питання; вміння пропонувати різноманітні ідеї в нерегламентованій ситуації; здатність вербально комбінувати, висловлювати варіанти вирішення проблеми; вміння відстоювати свою думку та приймати думку іншого; вміння удосконалювати, створювати нові форми, об'єкти на основі вже відомих).

Схарактеризовано рівні (високий, середній, низький) сформованості креативності дітей старшого дошкільного віку.

Обґрунтовано педагогічні умови (створення розвивального середовища, сприятливого для формування креативності; спрямування змісту практичної діяльності вихованців на розвиток їх креативності (впровадження в освітній процес завдань творчого характеру); підвищення

компетентності педагогів центрів розвитку дитини та батьків вихованців з проблеми формування креативності у старших дошкільників)) та методику формування креативності старших дошкільників у центрах розвитку дитини.

Проведене дослідження не вичерпує багатогранності теоретичних і практичних пошуків розв'язання проблеми. Подальші наукові пошуки можуть бути спрямовані на визначення ефективних форм і методів формування креативності дітей старшого дошкільного віку та інших вікових груп.

Ключові слова: *креативність, компоненти, критерії, показники та рівні сформованості креативності, старший дошкільний вік, центри розвитку дитини, педагогічні умови.*

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