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CHARACTERİSTİCS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CREATİVE THİNKİNG İN EARLY CHİLDHOOD

Abstract. Modern pedagogical thought regarding the integrity of thinking in a self-developing personality implies not only the development of logically sound thinking among young schoolchildren, but also the formation of heuristic, paradoxical, creative, and innovative thinking skills. The historical background of the issue and the analysis of contemporary pedagogical theory and practice on the subject show that, to date, pedagogical science has sufficiently addressed topics such as the formation of mental activity techniques in students alongside universal and creative skills; the relationship between theoretical knowledge and theoretical thinking; the development of productive (creative) thinking; the gradual formation of mental operations and the foundations for orientation in educational activities. However, pedagogical science has not adequately explored the didactic potential of integrating classroom and extracurricular activities in the development of intellectual and creative competencies of young schoolchildren. The problem lacks both theoretical justification and a clear definition of how it can be practically implemented in primary education. Based on the above, we identify a key contradiction in modern education: the necessity to improve the process of developing intellectual and creative competencies in young learners versus the insufficient theoretical and methodological groundwork for organizing this process. The scientific novelty of this article lies in identifying the features of intellectual and creative competencies in young schoolchildren including their ability and readiness to perform heuristic mental operations learned through imitation, their capacity for independent thinking, the originality with which they comprehend educational tasks and the transformation of integrated instructional and extracurricular activities into a productive mode of thinking and creativity that supports personality development.

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This article presents and theoretically substantiates a structural-functional model for the formation of intellectual and creative competencies in young learners through integrated instructional and extracurricular activities. The model defines the goals, content, and didactic tools of this process and lays the foundation for the application of innovative technologies in teaching. The author also identifies the pedagogical conditions that influence the development of intellectual and creative competencies during integrated learning and extracurricular activities of young schoolchildren. These conditions are supported by the following factors: a) the creation of a creative developmental environment based on the integration of instructional and extracurricular activities with methodological work involving primary school teachers to ensure the effectiveness of the development process; b) the establishment of a favorable creative atmosphere in the classroom through the use of the full potential of integrated learning and extracurricular activities; c) the sequential structuring of stages in the development of intellectual and creative competencies to ensure continuity in the presentation of learning materials. Today, researchers from various scientific fields are engaged in studying the problem of creative thinking. The multidimensional nature of the problem and the variety of conceptual approaches bring forth many unresolved questions. One such unresolved issue is the specific characteristics of creative thinking development at different stages of childhood. Considering the topic of this article and the issues outlined above, a more in-depth investigation of the matter is clearly necessary.

Keywords: young schoolchildren; learning materials; development of thinking; creativity; intellectual and creative competencies.

INTRODUCTION / ВСТУП

Statement of the problem / Постановка проблеми. People constantly encounter problems of varying complexity, intricacy, and importance, and they strive to solve them. The need for innovation and discovery has never ceased to exist. For centuries, the pursuit of discoveries was considered the privilege of only talented individuals and was the domain of a small number of people. However, the development of scientific and technological progress clearly shows that society needs more creative individuals. Contradictions have also arisen in educational practice. It is well known that, on the one hand, the volume of knowledge discovered by science and absorbed by students is rapidly increasing.

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However, on the other hand, the number of fundamental scientific principles, ideas, and deep generalizations is developing at a relatively low level. While the first of these two cases creates significant challenges for modern education, the second, on the contrary, makes it possible to effectively overcome these challenges. New educational standards not only equip students with knowledge resources but also require them to develop the ability to go beyond the boundaries of the classroom, make consistent judgments in unfamiliar situations, and find alternative solutions to overcome obstacles. In other words, they aim at the formation of key competencies.

The main functions of essential competencies, analyzed in terms of their role and place in the educational process, have been defined as follows:

- to show the younger generation that there is a social need to be prepared for public life;
- to serve as a condition for realizing the student's personal ideas in education and as a means of preventing disengagement from the learning process;
- to represent real-world objects for the targeted and integrated application of knowledge, skills, and abilities;
- to provide practical experience necessary for the formation of students' skills in applying their knowledge to real-world objects and situations;
- to become an integral part of the content of various academic subjects;
- to provide an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in practice to solve specific tasks;
- to reflect the characteristics of high-quality student training and serve as a means of organizing comprehensive, personally and socially significant educational assessment.

In order for students to acquire knowledge independently, they must develop the ability to discover new things, and these abilities should become both a means and a standard for achieving success in all areas. The development of the ability to make discoveries through various types of activities is possible by fostering a heuristic orientation in students' thinking.

Education should not only enrich students with real scientific knowledge – it must also systematically develop the thinking of future specialists. To achieve this, it is necessary to continue improving modern teaching methods. In recent years, new approaches that foster students' thinking abilities have been widely adopted in pedagogical practice. Some educators of the last century asserted that the way adults perceive, evaluate, and judge the surrounding world is largely determined by the formation of their mental structure in childhood.

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According to them, more than one-third of a person's intellectual development occurs by the age of 6, more than half by the age of 8, and over three-quarters by the age of 12 [7, p. 217].

Thus, the period from 6 to 12 years old holds great significance in a person's life, and a person's entire life depends on this critical period. Therefore, starting from the first grade, general education should be based on the principle of personality orientation, achieving meaningful life results, and forming students' skills to apply acquired knowledge, abilities, and skills in practice. When instilling the principles of the cognitive process in students, various teaching methods and techniques are used. The process of comparison for younger school-aged children has its own characteristics: difficulty expressing the results of comparison in words and listing unnecessary external features during comparison.

The elementary level of comparison is more typical for younger schoolchildren. At this level, students compare objects based on content and complexity, external and internal characteristics, as well as common and different properties. The highest level is the generalizing level. At this stage, the student compares objects according to their main properties and in a certain sequence. The most effective way to develop the skill of comparison is through simple sentences [5, p. 131–138].

Therefore, the ability to compare in younger schoolchildren is most effectively developed as a condition of their special preparation for the use of this cognitive operation. The development of classification is connected with the development of such forms of thinking as analysis, synthesis, comparison, deduction, and others. Its implementation involves identifying essential features of differences and similarities and establishing connections between them. Identifying relationships between phenomena, highlighting essential features, and excluding unnecessary ones is important not only for organizing the work of mastering individual concepts by students but also for the systematization of these concepts. All conducted studies pose the task for educators to develop children's thinking during the learning process across various subjects. However, such a general formulation of the issue is undoubtedly insufficient. Thinking cannot be developed by just any method. Since all methods are internally logically interconnected, their formation can only occur in a certain sequence. Taking into account the main characteristics of the intellectual and creative abilities of younger schoolchildren has a direct positive impact on improving the quality of the educational process [2].

Analysis of (major) recent research and publications / Аналіз (основних) останніх досліджень і публікацій. The stages of a child's

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development are characterized by the formation of innovations and the change of leading activities corresponding to each period. Therefore, from a scientific perspective, age periods sensitive to the development of creative thinking are distinguished. In the studies by A. Alizade [3], A. Gadirov [7], and R. Aliev [1], the early childhood period is considered as a phase of reproductive development and the formation of active creative thinking. As the authors note, during this period students develop a reproductive-productive type of activity. At this time, the school education system plays a significant role. The results of many researchers' studies increasingly show that children's skills in abstraction and generalization are richer than previously assumed.

Among educators and psychologists, there is no consensus on when children develop the ability to justify their own opinions. According to some, these skills mainly form during early school age. Some researchers believe that the formation of the ability to substantiate the correctness of one's own opinion and to prove the validity of one's reasoning can begin as early as the first grade [6]. Other authors attribute the emergence of these skills to ages 9–10. Their studies show that younger schoolchildren, under specially organized learning conditions, can consciously master various types of justification for their ideas: proof based on connections and comparisons, justification of ideas through deductive reasoning, and so on. However, the types of justification at this stage are quite simple, and their application is limited. J. Piaget associates the development of this ability with ages 12–14, when adolescents enter the stage of formal operations [6].

AIM AND TASKS / МЕТА ТА ЗАВДАННЯ

Understanding the relevance of this work made it possible to formulate the ***purpose*** of the research is based on the hypothesis that the process of developing the intellectual and creative competencies of younger schoolchildren will be effective under the following conditions:

a) significant features of the intellectual and creative competencies of younger schoolchildren are identified;

b) pedagogical conditions are determined that ensure positive dynamics in the process of developing intellectual and creative competencies within integrated educational and extracurricular activities of younger schoolchildren, including a model for the development of intellectual and creative competencies.

In accordance with the specified goal, the following ***tasks*** are set in the article identify:

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- the pedagogical conditions for the formation of intellectual and creative competencies in younger schoolchildren during integrated academic and extracurricular activities, as well as to provide their theoretical and experimental justification;
- the main characteristics of intellectual and creative competencies of younger schoolchildren;
- to determine the pedagogical conditions for the formation of intellectual and creative competencies in the process of integrated academic and extracurricular activities of younger schoolchildren, including a model for developing these competencies;
- to experimentally verify the effectiveness of the developed pedagogical conditions for the formation of intellectual and creative competencies of primary school students in the process of integrated academic and extracurricular activities.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK / ТЕОРЕТИЧНІ ОСНОВИ

As stated in the state documents on primary general education and the Concept of Modernization of Azerbaijani Education, the national education system has been renewed, and this work was carried out in line with new trends in universal development. The renewal was implemented at various levels of educational institutions in accordance with the main goal of education, and at this stage, the process of formation and development of graduates' competencies took place. These changes affected all levels of school education, including primary school. The state standards for primary general education include a provision stating that "…general education schools must form a unified system of universal knowledge, skills, abilities, as well as students' experience of personal responsibility and independent activity, that is, the key competencies that determine the quality of modern education" [4, p. 9].

Changes in the nature, focus, goals, and content of education, characteristic of the late 20th century and the first half of the 21st century, have increasingly been directed towards the free development of the individual, creative initiative, learner autonomy, competitiveness, and mobility of future specialists. However, the changes occurring in the world and in our republic regarding the purpose of education – especially in connection with such global tasks as ensuring an individual's integration into the social world and their active adaptation to it – have necessitated placing on the agenda the issue of providing education with a more comprehensive, personal, and socially integrated outcome.

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The concept of “competence-competency” has begun to be used in the general definition of an integrated socio-personal-behavioral phenomenon as the result of education.

When studying intellectual and creative competencies as a pedagogical phenomenon, we decided for the first time to turn to knowledge about their foundations. In the explanatory pedagogical dictionary of the Azerbaijani language, the concept of "foundation" is interpreted as "source, basis of something," "initial, important provisions of something" [2, p. 263]. In connection with the study of the problem of development and formation of intellectual and creative competence, the following questions arise: what are the foundations of educational and creative intellectual activity of younger schoolchildren, what are the pedagogical conditions for the formation of intellectual and creative competencies, and what are the functions of intellectual and creative competencies. We sought answers to these questions from the perspective of a systems approach, which has established itself as a means of understanding numerous holistic phenomena of nature and society.

The main goal of this concept was to find a set of laws explaining the functioning and development of systems of various classes, based on the system understood as a complex of interconnected components. In general systems theory, a system is understood as the interaction of various elements; that is, everything consisting of interconnected parts is called a system [3].

Thus, the systems approach implies the following aspects:

1) defining the structure of the object (system);
2) studying the external features (characteristics) of the object (system);
3) identifying changes in the system or object depending on changes in external environmental conditions.

In studying the essence of the phenomenon of intellectual and creative competencies, we could not overlook concepts such as "competence," "intellect," "creativity," and so on.

The term "competence" is used in very different semantic contexts, often with opposite meanings. It appeared in various documents as a fashionable foreign word (competence) and does not imply an attempt to understand some objectively existing pedagogical problem. Unlike knowledge, skills, and habits (actions based on patterns), competence implies the practice of independent activity based on universal knowledge. The concept of competence also changes the understanding of assessment and professional development. What matters is not that a person has internal resources to organize some work, but that they have the ability to use the resources they possess [5].

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The authors explain the concept of "competence" using the term "skill": "A skill is an action performed under certain conditions. A skill is represented as competence in activity. Competence is that which conditions the emergence of a skill" [5, p. 79].

Thus, just as contradictory is the authors' understanding of the essence of the competence-based approach and the definitions of its components and constituent parts, equally contradictory is its very essence.

The inclusion of competencies into the normative and practical components of education has made it possible to address a number of problems characteristic of modern schools – students assimilate a good set of theoretical knowledge but experience difficulties in applying this knowledge to solve specific real-life issues or problem situations. In this regard, special attention is given to key competencies. This process develops both under the influence of international trends and, to some extent, independently of them.

Thus, in the Education Law of Azerbaijan and in the state documents related to the modernization of education in our republic, the task assigned to the education system is emphasized as the importance of forming a unified system of universal skills and abilities – that is, basic competencies for students' independent activity and responsibility. The modernization concept defines basic competencies as the knowledge, skills, and readiness acquired by students to use work methods in life to solve practical and theoretical problems [4].

Key competencies are understood as the most universal competencies by their nature and scope of applicability. Their formation takes place within each academic subject and they are considered interdisciplinary by nature. Competence is not limited to just knowledge and skills. Competence represents the domain of interrelations existing between knowledge and practical activity. Analysis of various competencies shows that competence has a creative (innovative) orientation. In particular, creative competencies include: the ability to learn from experience, problem-solving skills, the ability to identify connections between past and new events, and the ability to find new solutions [6].

At the same time, the indicators of these skills are still insufficient to comprehensively represent the entire set of knowledge, abilities, skills, methods of activity, and experiences related to students' creative competencies.

There is no single agreed-upon list of key competencies. Since competencies primarily represent society's demands for educating citizens, such a list is largely determined by the consensus within a specific country or region. However, achieving such agreement is not always possible. For example, the international project "Definition and Selection of Key Competencies," conducted by the

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Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the National Center for Education Statistics of Switzerland and the USA, did not develop a strict definition of key competencies. The following preliminary list of key competencies was established during the Council of Europe symposium "Key Competencies for Europe."

European version of key competencies:

- Learning: establishing connections between one's own knowledge and its organization; developing personal learning methods; independence in one's own learning; ability to benefit from experience; problem-solving skills.
- Searching: querying various databases; consulting experts; interviewing people around; obtaining information; working with documents and their classification.
- Thinking: ability to approach societal development with varying degrees of critical thinking; establishing links between past and present events; coping with difficulties; understanding the importance of politics and economics in educational and work situations; ability to defend one's position and argue one's viewpoint during discussions.

Creative thinking, unlike reproductive thinking, is aimed at achieving new results and discovering new knowledge. Naturally, it involves the implementation of active cognitive operations. The execution of active perceptual, mnemonic, and richly imaginative actions is a prerequisite for the transition of mental activity to a creative level. In revealing the activity-based nature of cognitive abilities, we rely on the research of A. Alizade [3], R. Aliev [1], L. Vygotsky [11] and others.

Thus, cognitive abilities, acting as a cognitive construct of creative thinking, contribute to the creative process. At the same time, perception, memory, and imagination serve as operational mechanisms and structural components of creative thinking.

In connection with the study of the mechanisms of creative thinking, a question may arise about the functions that cognitive abilities perform at different stages of the creative process. The role of cognitive abilities in the creative process is as follows: they predefine the ultimate goal of creativity; develop an ideal model of the real situation; facilitate the renewal of the problem's content; participate in updating previously accumulated experience at both deliberate and spontaneous levels; and contribute to the spontaneous emergence of new ideas [11].

Thus, the functions of the cognitive process in creative thinking include: purposiveness, modeling, transformative, heuristic, and regulatory functions. These are also called the productive functions of perception:

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Purposiveness is the determination of the visual field of an object that corresponds to the goals and tasks of the activity. The imaginative perception that arises in a problem situation forms the subject of a person's research activity.

Modeling is the combination of individual sensations into an image of objects or phenomena that serve as ideal objects of a person's transformative activity in the creative process.

Modifier – the ability of the visual system to manipulate visible images. As a result of manipulating the perceptual image, the visible field is constantly transformed. The initial state visually changes, which helps to generate hypotheses for creative tasks.

Heuristic – the acquisition of new meaning from perceived ideas, ensuring the uniqueness of the products of creative activity.

The development of a child's intelligence consists of certain periods and stages during which the emergence and formation of the main intellectual structure occur. In the ontogeny of intelligence development, there is not a simple replacement of lower stages by higher ones, but an integration of all previously formed structures at a higher level. At the same time, the previous stage is reorganized and becomes part of the higher level.

A young child does not need to overcome stereotypes. Since children at this age do not yet have stereotypes, they are trying to acquire them. Children's intellectual activity differs from that of adults not in its mechanism, but in the degree of intellectual experience, the volume and quality of intellectual operations, and the ways of applying acquired knowledge in practice. Especially after entering school, having gained intellectual experience, the child assimilates socially approved ways of activity and behavior.

RESEARCH METHODS / МЕТОДИ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ

The methodological basis of the research includes: a systemic-synergetic approach to fostering a creative personality, a competency-based approach to education, and an individual-activity approach to teaching.

RESEARCH RESULTS / РЕЗУЛЬТАТИ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ

The study showed that the intellectual and creative development of a child is understood as a continuous dynamic process of improving forms and types of thinking, as well as systems of mental operations. The development of a child's intellect consists of certain periods and stages during which the emergence and formation of the main intellectual structure take place. In the ontogenesis of intellectual development, not only a simple replacement of lower stages by higher

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ones occurs, but also an integration of all previously formed structures at a higher level.

At the same time, the previous stage is restructured and becomes part of the higher level. The study determined that active perception, mnemonic, and imaginative actions are among the key components in the formation of intellectual and creative skills. It is important to systematically prepare these skills for educational activities. Thus, memory, perception, attention, and imagination function as cognitive constructs of creative thinking.

We have determined that the formation of heuristic techniques and thinking principles occurs based on the unity of intuitive and logical levels of thinking, as well as monological and dialogical forms. Their application opens broad opportunities for activating students' cognitive activities and developing various forms and levels of thinking. It is very important to maintain a sequence in developing heuristic thinking: first, intuitive thinking should be enriched, and then work should be done on logical principles and operations. In this way, logic becomes active rather than formal. The development of heuristic thinking contributes to the acquisition of intellectual and creative skills by primary school students.

CONCLUSIONS / ВИСНОВКИ

Analysis of scientific sources has led to the conclusion that intellectual and creative competencies are the ability and readiness for heuristic mental actions, acquired through imitation, independent thinking, and original perception of learning tasks. These competencies enable the transformation of learning activities into creative learning, resulting in the development of an active intellectual personality. Mastery of these competencies is an important component in fostering independence, initiative, and cognitive processes in primary school students. These competencies are formed based on children’s thinking experience and creative exploratory activities, which should be systematically and purposefully cultivated in both lessons and extracurricular activities.

Prospects for further research in this direction / Перспективи подальших досліджень у цьому напрямі. Thus, intellectual and creative skills allow a child to fully reveal his natural abilities, find his place in life, set important goals and achieve them. Conducting events related to the formation of intellectual and creative skills from an early age allows in the future in secondary school and universities to consciously acquire knowledge, students do not accidentally, but deliberately choose future professions, they develop a need for creative research work.

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ОСОБЛИВОСТІ РОЗВИТКУ КРЕАТИВНОГО МИСЛЕННЯ У РАННЬОМУ ДИТИНСТВІ

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Анотація. Сучасна педагогічна думка щодо цілісності мислення у саморозвивається особистості передбачає не лише розвиток логічно обґрунтованого мислення у молодших школярів, а й формування евристичних, парадоксальних, творчих та інноваційних навичок мислення. Історичні передумови проблеми та аналіз сучасної педагогічної теорії та практики з цього питання показують, що на сьогоднішній день педагогічна наука достатньо розглянула такі теми, як формування у учнів прийомів розумової діяльності поряд із універсальними та творчими навичками; взаємозв'язок між теоретичними знаннями та теоретичним мисленням; розвиток продуктивного (творчого) мислення; поступове формування розумових операцій та основ орієнтації в навчальній діяльності. Однак, педагогічна наука недостатньо дослідила дидактичний потенціал інтеграції класної та позакласної діяльності у розвитку інтелектуальних та творчих компетенцій молодших школярів. Проблемі бракує як теоретичного обґрунтування, так і чіткого визначення того, як її можна практично реалізувати в початковій освіті. Виходячи з вищезазначеного, ми визначаємо ключову суперечність у сучасній освіті: необхідність удосконалення процесу розвитку інтелектуальних та творчих компетенцій у молодших школярів проти недостатньої теоретичної та методологічної бази для організації цього процесу. Наукова новизна цієї статті полягає у визначенні особливостей інтелектуальних та творчих компетенцій у молодших школярів, включаючи їх здатність та готовність виконувати евристичні розумові операції, засвоєні через наслідування, їхню здатність до самостійного мислення, оригінальність, з якою вони осмислюють навчальні завдання, та перетворення інтегрованої навчальної та позакласної діяльності на продуктивний спосіб мислення та творчості, що підтримує розвиток особистості. У статті представлено та теоретично обґрунтовано структурно-функціональну модель формування інтелектуальних та творчих компетенцій у молодших школярів через інтегровану навчальну та позакласну діяльність. Модель визначає цілі, зміст та дидактичні засоби цього процесу та закладає основу для застосування інноваційних технологій у навчанні. Автор також визначає педагогічні умови, що впливають на розвиток інтелектуальних та творчих компетенцій під час інтегрованого навчання та позакласної діяльності молодших школярів. Ці умови підкріплюються такими

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факторами: а) створення творчого розвивального середовища, заснованого на інтеграції навчальної та позакласної діяльності з методичною роботою за участю вчителів початкової школи для забезпечення ефективності розвивального процесу; б) встановлення сприятливої творчої атмосфери в класі шляхом використання всього потенціалу інтегрованого навчання та позакласної діяльності; в) послідовне структурування етапів розвитку інтелектуальних та творчих компетенцій для забезпечення наступності у викладі навчальних матеріалів. Сьогодні дослідники з різних наукових галузей займаються вивченням проблеми творчого мислення. Багатовимірний характер проблеми та різноманітність концептуальних підходів породжують багато невирішених питань. Одним із таких невирішених питань є специфічні особливості розвитку творчого мислення на різних етапах дитинства. Враховуючи тему цієї статті та окреслені вище питання, очевидно, що необхідне більш поглиблене дослідження цього питання.

Ключові слова: молодші школярі; навчальні матеріали; розвиток мислення; креативність; інтелектуальні та творчі компетенції.

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