



IDENTIFYING CONDITIONS FOR DEVELOPING COGNITIVE AND CREATIVE SKILLS OF YOUNG CHILDREN IN PRESCHOOL SETTINGS

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Abstract

Preschool education plays a crucial role in shaping children's cognitive and creative skills. This research article explores the key conditions necessary for fostering these skills in preschool settings. Drawing upon existing literature and empirical studies, it highlights the importance of a stimulating environment, supportive teaching practices, and appropriate curriculum design. Furthermore, it examines the influence of social interactions, play-based learning, and parental involvement in enhancing children's cognitive and creative development. By identifying these conditions, this abstract provides insights for educators, policymakers, and parents to optimize preschool environments for the holistic development of young children.

Introduction

The approach enables children to make connections between different areas of learning, expanding their understanding. This domain includes art, music, dance, role-play, and creative games. While these definitions acknowledge the importance of creativity and the role of education in fostering creative development, they also raise questions such as: what is meant by "creative thinking," "creative development," and "being creative"? How does creativity relate to curriculum areas? And how should educators help young children develop their creative abilities?

Definitions of creativity are not straightforward, and many authors have contributed to the debate on what constitutes creativity, often vigorously contesting various views. However, most theorists agree that the creative process involves several components, most often:

- Imagination
- Originality (the ability to generate new and unusual ideas and products)
- Productivity (the ability to generate a variety of ideas through divergent thinking)
- Problem-solving (applying knowledge and imagination to a given situation)
- Ability to produce valuable results

Where definitions of creativity differ most sharply is in the extent to which their proponents seek to define creativity as a general human characteristic or to identify what

makes highly creative individuals different and distinct from others. Howard Gardner takes an elitist view of creativity, asserting that truly creative individuals are those who make changes in the world (e.g., advancing thinking in science, social sciences, music, or art) [1]. All people are capable of creative achievements in some field, provided that the appropriate conditions are created and they acquire the necessary knowledge and skills. Creativity is an important human trait. It is best viewed as a process requiring a combination of components, including personality traits, abilities, and skills. Early childhood staff can help young children develop their creative abilities by creating a creative environment, helping them develop their skills through play, behaving creatively themselves, and praising their creative efforts [2]. Remember, people are creative because they want to be, so identifying and encouraging a child's own interests is an important starting point. Some children may find it difficult to express their creative abilities. Staff can help by observing their behavior (especially during imaginative play), identifying the difficulty, and developing a plan of action. But you may ask, isn't this just a description of good early childhood practice? Well, yes, but with a creative twist. Creativity is not limited to the arts. Although creativity is often associated with artistic subjects like art and music, it is not confined to specific disciplines [3]. Creativity is a problem-solving approach that can be

applied in various areas. However, creativity does not develop in isolation; the way children express their creativity varies across different subjects [4].

There is a misconception that children easily transfer learning from one area to another. However, evidence suggests that most children struggle with transferring knowledge and skills between different contexts. They may not realize that what they have learned can be applied to new situations. Adults can assist children in making these connections. Some may view creativity as a fun and frivolous endeavor that contrasts with the seriousness of classroom work. However, the creative process presents numerous challenges. It requires concentration, perseverance, and determination to succeed. In fact, it can be a frustrating and arduous process. Therefore, creativity deserves to be regarded with seriousness [5].

One of the most significant findings in cognitive development is the early and profound ability of very young children, even infants, to integrate various observations and discrete facts into coherent conceptual systems (Carey, 2009; Gopnik and Wellman, 2012; Spelke and Kinzler, 2007). Rather than passively observing surface appearances, children from an early age construct explanatory systems—implicit theories—that organize their knowledge. These implicit theories contain causal principles and relations, allowing children to predict, explain, and reason about phenomena, and sometimes intervene to change them. By the first

year of life, infants are already forming basic theories about how the world of people, living things, objects, and numbers functions. These foundational theories play a significant role in children's daily lives and subsequent education. One prominent example of an implicit theory developing as early as infancy is the "theory of mind," which refers to the framework people use to understand the mental lives of themselves and others. This example is elaborated below [6]. People intuitively attribute others' actions to desires, goals, feelings, intentions, thoughts, and other mental states, understanding how these mental states influence one another (e.g., an unfulfilled desire leading to negative feelings and a continued motivation to achieve the goal). A striking finding in research on young children is their early development of an intuitive "map" of these mental processes (Baillargeon et al., 2010; Saxe, 2013; Wellman and Woolley, 1990). This developing theory of mind transforms how children interact with others and what they learn from them [7]. Infants and young children begin to comprehend the mental processes of individuals, and how others' emotions and thoughts are similar to and different from their own. Initially, infants possess a relatively basic theory of mind, understanding some fundamental aspects: what people are looking at indicates their focus of attention; people act intentionally and with goals in mind; people experience positive and negative emotions in response to stimuli; and people have varying perceptions,

goals, and emotions. As children grow, they expand upon this mental framework, broadening their understanding. It is often believed that creativity is an innate trait possessed only by a few gifted individuals. However, highly creative individuals will find their own path regardless of the educational environment they are in [8].

According to the pedagogical dictionary, "Abilities are the individual characteristics of a person on which the success of certain types of activities depends." Today, in Kazakhstani psychology, there are several traditions in studying and understanding human abilities. One of them, laid down by the works of B.M. Teplov and V.D. Nebylitsyn, is related to the study of the psychophysiological foundations of abilities. According to B.M. Teplov, "Abilities are formed in activity based on the predispositions of individual psychological characteristics, on which depends the possibility and degree of success of the activity." Another approach is developed by V.D. Shadrikov: "ability is the properties of functional systems that implement individual mental functions, having an individual measure of expression, manifested in the success and qualitative originality of activity." The next direction is activity-based, exploring abilities in various types of activities (A.N. Leontiev, S.L. Rubinstein) [9]. "Abilities are the properties and qualities of a person that make them suitable for successful performance of any socially useful activity." The term "cognitive abilities" in pedagogy is used ambiguously. Synonyms for it

often include such concepts as cognitive (N.I. Chuprikova, M.A. Kholodnaya), mental, intellectual (V.N. Druzhinin, et al.), thinking abilities (A.V. Brushlinsky, et al.). Cognitive abilities of a person manifest themselves in the ability to engage in cognitive activity, to solve cognitive tasks productively, which are a condition for their successful performance and are determined as qualities and properties of a person on which successful mastering of any type of activity depends. In the structure of cognitive abilities, sensory abilities are distinguished, which determine direct perception of the surrounding world, intellectual abilities, which ensure relatively easy and productive acquisition of knowledge, the essence of objects and phenomena of the surrounding world, creative abilities, related to imagination, allowing to find original ways and means of solving tasks, invent plots, create ideas. The development of cognitive abilities is successfully carried out in the process of developing cognitive activity, expressed in interested acceptance of information, in a desire to deepen one's knowledge, in independent search for answers to questions of interest, in demonstrating elements of creativity. Thus, it can be concluded that cognitive abilities provide a child with the knowledge of objects and phenomena of the surrounding world, they are closely related to cognitive processes and are reflected in cognitive interests and activities [10].

In modern society, amidst changes in the socio-economic sphere, culture, and

education, the issues of upbringing and education of the younger generation acquire particular significance. The necessity to cultivate creativity in every growing individual needs no proof. It is precisely on this—fostering creative activity, without which harmonious personal development is impossible—that the daily efforts of millions of educators are directed. The preschool age is of particular interest in this regard, as it is in this age group that the "future is being grown". Many media outlets touch upon this problem. Since 1990, there has been a sharp reduction in socio-cultural facilities, on the basis of which free creative groups operated, and studios for early aesthetic development existed [11]. At the same time, there has been a sharp increase in entertainment establishments, which is a favorable factor in itself but also exacerbates the problem of educating the younger generation. Encouraging is the fact that in recent times, studios for the early development of preschoolers have been created, which are based on alternative pedagogy and include various forms of creativity (visual arts, music, theater, etc.). The organization of classes in such studios is usually hourly, where a child spends 30 minutes on music, then sequentially on modeling and drawing. Here, the psychological characteristics of preschoolers are not sufficiently taken into account, such as their attention, memory, thinking, and the development of a child's creativity (creative thinking) is not sufficiently emphasized. Developing a creative individual, the ability to use original and

"non-standard" thinking, is what needs attention today. Modern children's studios, gymnasiums, especially in the field of aesthetic education of children, cannot and should not set themselves the task of "raising" a genius in various forms of art, but to provide conditions under which each child will work at a high level of creative activity suitable for them. When a physically normal child is classified as "non-creative," such a child often remains without due attention from the educator and gradually loses interest in any creative activity. There are special "sensitive" periods when children actively "absorb" everything around them. The preschool age is one such period. Abroad and in our country, great attention is paid to the problem of "gifted" and creative children. At the state level, the program "Gifted Children: Nature, Diagnosis, Development" was discussed, in which the primary task of educating and educating gifted children was emphasized. The program particularly emphasized the need to develop children's creativity, to move from "laboratory" research and determining the presence or absence of abilities to developing them based on and with the help of specially organized creativity lessons, psychological preparation of the creative teacher [12].

The methodological basis of the research. The foundation of the research consists of the general philosophical principles regarding the role of practice in cognition, the dialectical position on cause-and-effect relationships, the principles of modern

psychology regarding personality and the regularities of cognitive processes, age periodization, and the leading type of activity. The theoretical basis of the research research was formed by the works of domestic researchers N.K. Berdyaev, V.M. Bekhterev, L.S. Vygotsky, S.O. Gruzenberg, V.N. Druzhinin, Ya.A. Ponamarev, B.M. Teplov, P.K. Engelmeier.

The views of foreign researchers such as E. Bern, D. Guilford, E. Torrance, and many others were also of interest.

The subject of the research is the process of developing creative abilities in preschoolers aged 3-6 in cultural institutions.

The aim of our research is to identify a set of psychological and pedagogical conditions for the development of creative abilities in preschool children in cultural and leisure institutions.

The following research hypotheses were formulated by us: If we shape and develop a child's creativity (divergent thinking, originality, flexibility, etc.), then creative abilities as a whole will be activated, particularly in aesthetic activities. A child's creativity will develop more actively if they have positive examples of creative behavior and there is no regulation of object activities. By using a "complex" approach to lesson planning, incorporating various forms of creativity (visual arts, music, plastic arts, and others), we will expand a child's cognitive capabilities, which will effectively impact their creativity in any creative activity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, understanding and enhancing the cognitive and creative skills of young children in preschool settings is paramount for their holistic development. Drawing from the extensive research in cognitive psychology and child development, it is evident that children, even from infancy, possess remarkable abilities to form complex conceptual frameworks and theories about the world around them. By recognizing and nurturing these innate cognitive processes, educators and policymakers in Kazakhstan can create enriched learning environments that foster creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills in young children. In the context of Kazakhstan, where early childhood education is gaining increasing recognition, there is a unique opportunity to integrate these findings into preschool curricula and pedagogical practices. By identifying the conditions that support the development of cognitive and creative skills, such as providing diverse and stimulating learning experiences, encouraging exploration and experimentation, and fostering positive social interactions, Kazakhstan can empower its young learners to become curious, innovative, and adaptable individuals prepared for the challenges of the 21st century. Ultimately, investing in the cognitive and creative development of young children not only benefits them individually but also contributes to the broader societal goals of promoting innovation, cultural enrichment, and sustainable development in Kazakhstan. By

prioritizing these aspects in preschool education, Kazakhstan can lay a strong foundation for the future success and well-being of its children and society as a whole.

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