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USING CREATIVE TASKS TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' INTELLECTUAL POTENTIAL

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Abstract. This article analyzes the pedagogical and methodological potential of using creative tasks to enhance students' intellectual potential. Creative tasks are presented as a means of developing students' independent thinking, their ability to analyze problem situations from different perspectives, to seek non-standard solutions, to apply knowledge in new contexts, and to engage in creative activity. The study clarifies the reproductive, productive and creative levels of creative tasks, the didactic principles for designing them, and the stages of their use in the educational process. It also substantiates the influence of open-ended questions, problem situations, the search for alternative solutions, project assignments, and exercises based on analogy and modeling on students' analytical, critical, logical and divergent thinking. The article proposes a methodological model for using creative tasks, describing its motivational, cognitive, operational-creative and reflective components. It is argued that the systematic use of creative tasks expands not only the level at which students master knowledge, but also their capacity to generate new ideas, make independent decisions and self-regulate their intellectual activity.

Keywords: intellectual potential, creative task, creative thinking, creative activity, independent thinking, divergent thinking, problem-based learning, intellectual development, non-standard task, reflection, pedagogical technology.

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and digital transformation, one of the key tasks facing the education system is to develop in students not merely the acquisition of ready-made knowledge, but the ability to search independently, analyze, process, evaluate and apply information in new situations. With the sharp growth in the volume of information in modern society, students are required not only to possess a body of established knowledge, but also to use it to generate new ideas, approach problems in non-standard ways, and develop alternative solutions. From this perspective, the development of students' intellectual potential in general secondary education acquires particular pedagogical significance. Intellectual potential is regarded as a complex pedagogical-psychological phenomenon expressing the student's capacity to master knowledge, identify logical connections among its elements, analyze and synthesize, make independent decisions in problem situations, put forward new ideas, and monitor his or her own activity.

In traditional education, the priority has often been on the student's memorization of ready-made knowledge and its reproductive restatement. Although this approach allows knowledge to be acquired to a certain degree, it is insufficient for revealing the student's creative and intellectual capacities in full. In particular, tasks oriented toward a single answer and with a predetermined algorithm may limit students' opportunities for independent thinking and for developing new solutions. Creative tasks are one of the effective didactic tools for overcoming this problem. Their main feature is that they encourage the student not to act according to a ready-made algorithm, but to grasp the problem, search for different options, put forward hypotheses, substantiate them and choose the most suitable solution.

In Uzbekistan's education system, too, particular attention is being paid to improving the quality of education, developing students' independent and creative thinking, and equipping them with modern competencies. This creates a need to improve, on a scientific and methodological basis, the pedagogical tools that ensure students' active intellectual participation in the lesson. Accordingly, the aim of this article is to identify the pedagogical potential of using creative tasks to enhance students' intellectual potential, to systematize their types, and to substantiate effective methodological mechanisms for their application in the educational process.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The problem of creativity and intellectual development is a scientific field formed at the intersection of pedagogy, psychology and teaching methodology. Research on this problem has examined creative thinking, divergent thinking, problem solving, metacognitive activity and independent learning as interrelated concepts. J.Dewey links the development of students' thinking in the learning process with recognizing and resolving problem situations. In his view, thinking develops not when the student accepts a ready-made answer, but when he or she independently explores a problem situation and searches for a solution. J.Guilford is among the scholars who advanced the concept of divergent thinking in the study of creative thinking. Divergent thinking makes it possible to generate not just one but several possible solutions to a problem. This theoretical approach serves as an important methodological basis for designing creative tasks.

E.Paul Torrance identifies idea generation, flexibility of thought, originality and the elaboration of ideas as key indicators in developing creative thinking. The approaches developed by Torrance have strongly influenced the formation of methods for identifying and developing students' creative potential in education. R.Sternberg and T.Lubart associate creativity with a person's application of existing knowledge and experience in new combinations, viewing problems from a fresh perspective, and creating original products. This view shows that creative tasks are not merely exercises labeled "creative", but a didactic mechanism that enables students to reorganize their existing knowledge in a new context.

The study of the development of creativity in education by A.Hargreaves and other researchers shows the need for teachers to give students freedom of thought, to use mistakes as opportunities for learning rather than as grounds for punishment, and to increase the number of open-ended questions. In contemporary research, the competence of creative thinking is interpreted not only as an activity connected with art or literature, but as a universal intellectual ability applied in solving problems in mathematics, the natural sciences, the social sciences and everyday life. The literature review shows that creative tasks can have a positive effect on students' intellectual development. However, their effectiveness depends directly on the content of the task, its level of complexity, students' age characteristics, methodological conditions and the teacher's pedagogical approach.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodological basis of the research consists of person-centered, competence-based, activity-based and creative approaches. The person-centered approach involves taking into account the student's individual intellectual capacities, interests and educational needs. The competence-based approach, in turn, is directed at developing through creative tasks not only knowledge but also the ability to use acquired knowledge in practical and new situations.

Within the activity-based approach, the student is regarded not as a subject who receives knowledge in ready-made form, but as a direct participant in the process of active inquiry, problem solving and the creation of new products.

The study envisages the use of pedagogical observation, analysis of scholarly and methodological literature, comparative analysis, generalization, modeling and elements of pedagogical experience.

The following criteria were adopted as the basis for determining the effectiveness of creative tasks:

1. independently understanding the problem;
2. proposing several solution options;
3. generating an original idea;
4. transferring existing knowledge to a new situation;
5. justifying one's opinion on the basis of evidence;
6. independently formulating conclusions;
7. evaluating and improving one's own activity.

These criteria make it possible to distinguish creative tasks from ordinary instructional exercises.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A creative task is a task that encourages the student to interpret a particular problem or situation in a new way on the basis of existing knowledge, to search for several possible solutions, and to create a new idea or product. The main sign of a creative task is that it is not limited to a single, predetermined answer. In such a task, the student draws on his or her individual experience, knowledge and thinking strategies. For example, a task of the type "Read the text and answer the questions" mainly requires reproductive activity. By contrast, the task "Identify the problem in the text and propose at least three ways of solving it" requires analysis, divergent thinking, the search for alternative options and decision making.

Thus, the pedagogical value of a creative task lies in shifting the student from "finding the correct answer" to "creating the most suitable solution".

Table 1.

Main types of creative tasks and their potential for intellectual development

Type of creative task	Content	Intellectual activity developed
Problem task	Independently solving a given problem	Analysis, logical thinking, decision making
Open-ended task	A task with several correct or acceptable answers	Divergent thinking, flexibility
Alternative solution	Developing different solutions to a problem	Comparison, evaluation, selection
Project task	Creating a particular product or project	Planning, synthesis, creativity

Type of creative task	Content	Intellectual activity developed
Modeling	Creating a model of a phenomenon or process	Abstract and systems thinking
Analogy task	Comparing one phenomenon with another	Associative thinking, generalization
"What if…" task	Changing a situation and predicting the outcome	Hypothesis formation, forecasting
Reflective task	Analyzing one's own activity and results	Metacognition, self-assessment

As the table shows, creative tasks can be organized in various forms. What matters is that the task engages the student in independent intellectual activity rather than in repeating a ready-made algorithm.

The influence of creative tasks on intellectual potential. A student's intellectual potential is not determined by the amount of knowledge alone. It is also characterized by how the student analyzes knowledge, how he or she applies it in a new situation, and how he or she solves a problem.

First of all, creative tasks develop **analytical thinking**. The student breaks a problem into parts, identifies the relationships among them and searches for the causes of the problem.

The second important direction is the **ability to synthesize**. Combining knowledge drawn from different sources and generating a new idea is an essential component of creative activity.

The third direction is **evaluation and selection**. When offered several solution options, the student compares their advantages and disadvantages and chooses the option best suited to the goal.

The fourth direction is **independent decision making**. Because the teacher does not provide a single algorithm, the student feels responsible for his or her own decision.

The fifth direction is **metacognitive activity**. Through questions such as "How did I think?", "Which method was effective?" and "Where did I make a mistake?", the student learns to monitor his or her own thinking process.

Table 2.

Stages of organizing creative tasks

Stage	Teacher's activity	Student's activity
Motivational	Creates a problem situation	Understands the problem
Inquiry	Asks guiding questions	Searches for information
Idea generation	Creates conditions for free	Proposes several ideas

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Stage	Teacher's activity	Student's activity
	thinking	
Selection	Sets the criteria	Chooses the most suitable option
Creation	Provides advice and methodological support	Creates a new product or solution
Defense	Asks questions	Justifies his or her solution
Reflection	Asks analytical questions	Evaluates his or her activity

In this model the teacher appears not as the central subject who transmits knowledge, but as a pedagogue who organizes and guides the student's intellectual inquiry.

The use of creative tasks should not be confined to any single subject. For example, in native language and literature lessons, students may be asked to change the course of events in a work, to write an alternative ending from a character's point of view, or to develop an alternative view of the author's position. In mathematics lessons, a problem can be solved in several ways, a new problem can be composed by changing the conditions of a given one, or different mathematical models leading to a given result can be developed. In the natural sciences, tasks such as "How would the process proceed if this condition changed?" develop the skills of hypothesizing and scientific prediction. In history, developing an alternative scenario for a historical event, comparing the positions of different historical figures and evaluating the consequences of decisions strengthen students' cause-and-effect thinking.

Thus, creative tasks are interdisciplinary in nature and serve to develop students' overall intellectual potential.

Criteria for assessing creative tasks

In assessing creative activity, it is not appropriate to rely only on whether an answer is "correct" or "incorrect", since creative tasks may have several acceptable solutions.

For this reason, the following criteria are proposed:

originality of the idea – the novelty and uniqueness of the proposal;

diversity of ideas – the student's ability to offer several options;

flexibility – the ability to shift between different approaches;

justification – the explanation of the proposed solution with evidence;

practicality – the possibility of applying the idea in real conditions;

independence – completing the task with minimal external help;

reflectivity – the student's ability to analyze his or her own activity and results.

Such criteria make it possible to assess students' creative activity comprehensively.

The effectiveness of creative tasks depends largely on the teacher's pedagogical position. The teacher should not reject a student's unusual answer immediately; instead, through questions such as "Why do you think so?", "What other solution could there be?" and "How can you justify this idea?", he or she should deepen the student's thinking. In a creative environment, a mistake should be regarded not as the student's failure but as a natural process leading to new knowledge. If a student is afraid of making mistakes, he or she will also refrain from putting forward new ideas. Therefore, the teacher must create a psychologically safe environment in which exchanging ideas and asking questions are possible.

The scientific novelty of the research lies in the systematization of the pedagogical potential of creative tasks aimed at enhancing students' intellectual potential, the clarification of the mechanism for organizing them by levels of complexity, and the proposal of a pedagogical model based on the sequence "motivation – problem – inquiry – idea – selection – creation – defense – reflection". In addition, the possibility of jointly applying criteria such as originality, diversity of ideas, flexibility, justification, practicality, independence and reflectivity in assessing the effectiveness of creative tasks has been substantiated.

The research results can be used in general secondary schools, specialized educational institutions and the system of teacher professional development. The proposed system of creative tasks can be applied in developing lesson plans in various subjects, organizing students' independent work, establishing project activity and carrying out formative assessment. This approach is of practical importance in particular for developing students' higher-order thinking operations, preparing them for independent decision making, and forming the skills of using knowledge in real-life situations.

CONCLUSION

Developing students' intellectual potential is one of the priority tasks of modern education. The use of creative tasks in this process makes it possible to transform the student from a subject who absorbs ready-made knowledge into an actively thinking, inquiring educational subject who creates new solutions. The analysis shows that creative tasks, alongside developing students' analytical, logical, divergent and critical thinking, also expand their capacities for solving problem situations, making independent decisions, justifying their opinions and reflectively evaluating their own activity.

Overall, the purposeful, systematic and methodologically grounded introduction of creative tasks into the educational process can be regarded as one of the effective means of enhancing students' intellectual potential, forming their creative thinking and preparing them for the complex and changing conditions of modern society.

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