

## Development of Creativity in Schoolchildren through Art

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*The purpose of this paper is to examine the development of creativity, and the extent to which it can be fostered through arts within primary and junior classrooms. The paper presents an approach towards understanding and development of creativity, an overview of the current state of research and thinking on the relationship between the arts and creative development in schoolchildren. The study examined a number of issues about the effective development of creative abilities, offering some solutions and recommendations.*

Key words: *creativity; schoolchildren; art; education; development*

### Introduction

Human creativity is not a new subject of study by scientists. The nature of human abilities caused and causes huge interest in people at all times. In the past, the community did not have a special need to master art.

In the past, the society didn't attempt to understand the special needs of creative people. Talents emerged by themselves. People spontaneously created masterpieces of art, made scientific discoveries and invented, thus satisfying the needs of a developing human culture.

In modern times the situation has radically changed. And it requires from societies not stereotyped habitual actions, and dynamic, flexible thinking, or knowledge of contemporary art, but adaptation to the new conditions of the time, a creative approach to solving both large and small problems.

Given that the share of mental work dominates in almost all professions and constantly grows, and more and more practical work is passed on to machines, it is obvious that creative human abilities should be recognized as the most significant part of the intellect and issue of their development. That is one of the major problems in the education of the modern human.

After all, Cultural Property, accumulated by mankind, is the result of creative human activities. And how human society will move forward in the future will be determined by the creativity of the younger generation.<sup>1</sup>

The article's inquiry subject is a pedagogical process, namely the process of development of schoolchildren's creative abilities.

The objective is to study the issue of the development of schoolchildren's creative abilities, namely those aspects that are necessary for teachers in this field. The following tasks:

- determining the main components of creativity based on the analysis of literature;
- stipulation of conditions favourable to the development of children's creativity;
- determination of guidelines and pedagogical tasks for the development of the creative abilities of students.

For the research topics described by this article the following methods of scientific and pedagogical research were used:

1. study, analysis and synthesis of the literature on this topic;
2. diagnosis of children's creative abilities;
3. study and generalization of pedagogical experience in the development of children's creative abilities.

## 1. Theoretical background

The development of creativity is a psychological concept that has been studied for generations. Existing literature shows that the concept of creativity has expanded into diversified fields, including the arts, science and business disciplines.<sup>2</sup> Researchers have long recognized that creativity can refer to a person, process, product, or environmental response within even a single context.<sup>3</sup>

Creativity is an elusive and contested concept. There have been many attempts to define it. Creativity has been described as 'a state of mind in which all our intelligences are working together' and as 'the ability to solve

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<sup>1</sup> Березина, В. Г. – Викентьев, И. Л. – Модестов, С. Ю. (1994). *Детство творческой личности*. Санкт-Петербург: Издательство Буковского.

<sup>2</sup> Stumpf, H. (1995). Scientific creativity: A short overview. *Educational Psychology review* 7, 225–241.

<sup>3</sup> Rhodes, M. (1961). *An analysis of creativity*. Phi Delta Kappan 42, 305–310.

problems and fashion products and to raise new questions'.<sup>4</sup> Few experts agree on a precise definition, but when we say the word 'creativity', everyone senses a similar feeling. When we are creative, we are aware of a special excitement.

Creativity can be understood as having the power or quality to express yourself in your own way. Children are naturally creative. They see the world through fresh, new eyes and then use what they see in original ways. One of the most rewarding aspects of working with children is the chance to watch them create.

The term "creativity," as it relates to the classroom, goes beyond art class and school projects. At its best, creativity in the classroom is about how a teacher captivates students and inspires them to learn. Teachers who are practised in the art of developing creativity are generally focused on creating a classroom culture that thrives on creativity. They build a repertoire of strategies designed to spark new ideas and bring out a spirit of creativity in students, and they adapt and create ideas for their own curriculum needs. What is needed is teaching that is innovative. Children need to experience the unpredictable and the uncertain. They need lessons that produce surprise. As Fisher argued, creative learners need creative teachers who provide both order and adventure, and who are willing to do the unexpected and take risks.<sup>5</sup>

Mihaela Roco<sup>6</sup> states that being creative means creating something new, original and appropriate for reality. H. Jaoui<sup>7</sup> refers to creativity "as the process of associating and combining pre-existing elements in new structures". Roșca<sup>8</sup> defines creativity as "the ability or the capacity to produce something new and valuable". Other authors such as Margaret A. Boden<sup>9</sup> believe that in general creativity means "creating new and original combinations using old ideas", but that these combinations should have a certain value.

<sup>4</sup> Gardner, H. (1993). *Frames of mind: the theory of multiple intelligences* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Basic Books.

<sup>5</sup> Fisher, R. (2002) *Creative Minds: Building Communities of Learning for the Creative Age. Paper presented at Teaching Qualities Initiative Conference*. Hong Kong Baptist University.

<sup>6</sup> Roco, M. (2004). *Creativitate și inteligență emoțională*. Iași. Editura Polirom.

<sup>7</sup> Jaoui, H. (1990). La créativité. Mode d'emploi. *Applications pratiques*. Paris: ESF.

<sup>8</sup> Roșca, Al. (1981). *Creativitate generală și specifică*. Editura Academiei, București.

<sup>9</sup> Boden, A. (1995). *The Creative Mind: Myths and Mechanism*. Basic Books, New York.

J. P. Guilford claimed that all people are creative and they can be distributed on a continuous scale of creativity. I. A. Taylor distinguishes five levels of creativity: expressive creativity, productive creativity, inventive creativity, innovative creativity and emerging creativity.

Sternberg<sup>10</sup> argues that literature on creativity is limited, and often lacks conciseness. While scholars often disagree on what the definition of creativity entails, they do, however, agree that conceptualizations of creativity across the spectrum are variable and highly subjective. Lacking a sound definition of what creativity entails has many implications for studying this concept within classroom practices and the context of the educational system. The definition of creativity is subject to cultural and regional divergence, as westernized nations tend to perceive it as being innate intelligence and ability that is substantiated by a product or an effect.<sup>11</sup> Contrary to this, eastern views surrounding creativity see it as an act that an individual pursues in order to achieve personal fulfilment. While a degree of confusion arises from psychological theorists attempting to define creativity, a recurring theme throughout the literature is the systematization of four distinct facets of creativity:

- a) the creative person;
- b) process;
- c) environment;
- d) product<sup>12</sup>

The present study focuses on the development of creativity through art. Art has long been used as a tool to stimulate creativity, and early years professionals are set to benefit from a government strategy which forms partnerships with artists and other creative early years professionals.

Literature suggests that the arts are at the crux of this pedagogical shift to fostering creativity within the educational context.<sup>13</sup> In the wake of preparing youth to thrive within the future societal domain, arts education develops creative individuals who view the world through a unique lens,

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<sup>10</sup> Sternberg, R. J. (2006). The nature of creativity. *Creativity Research Journal*, 18(1), 87–98.

<sup>11</sup> Schmidt, A. L. (2011). Creativity in science: Tension between perception and practice. *Creative Education*, 2(5), 435–445.

<sup>12</sup> Battey, M., Furnham, A. (2006). Creativity, intelligence, and personality: A critical review of the scattered literature. *Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs*, 132(4), 355–429.

<sup>13</sup> Sheridan-Rabideau, M. (2010). Creativity repositioned. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 111, 54–58.

blurring the boundaries of national, racial and socioeconomic boundaries.<sup>14</sup> Sheridan Rabideau suggests that it is the creative thinking manifest in arts-education that elicits entrepreneurial thinking. Furthermore, Christensen and Kirkland support this notion as they posit that art making is associated with higher order cognitive skills, allowing learners to develop a strong sense of self in relation to the greater society. Additionally,<sup>15</sup> they assert that “artistic education can be considered a fertile area for the development of creativity, and is now a general learning goal within the current primary education curriculum.”<sup>16</sup> Ultimately, it is vital to consider that curriculum documents at a global scale explicitly reference the importance of creative thinking within an educational context as a curricular goal.<sup>17</sup> According to W. Lambert Brittain,<sup>18</sup> author of *Creativity, Art, and the Young Child*, “The child’s personality often shines through loud and clear when he or she draws or paints. Brittain says that “Art activities not only reflect a child’s inner self: they help form it.”

## 2. Statement on the main results of the study

One of the areas in addressing the challenges of creativity, the aesthetic education of students, or education through art, is inseparably linked with the problem of the rational use of schoolchildren’s free time and the problem of how to redirect their interests towards creativity. These days the interests of students and teenagers are mainly aimed at computer technology (games, etc.).

Teenagers perceive art only as contemplators, without taking part in the making, not testing their creativity. The solution to this problem is expanding the network of clubs based on arts and crafts, drawing and

<sup>14</sup> Christensen, L. M. – Kirkland, L. D. (2010). Early childhood visual arts curriculum: Freeing spaces to express developmental and cultural palettes of mind. *Childhood Education*, 86(2), 87–91.

<sup>15</sup> De Backer, F. – Lombaerts, K. – De Mette, T. – Buffel, T. – Elias, W. (2012). Creativity in artistic education. Introducing artists into primary schools. *International Journal of Art & Design*, 31(1), 53–66.

<sup>16</sup> Prummel, J. (2006). *Het deurenpaleis, over creativiteit en onderwijs. The Palace of Doors, about Creativity and Education*. Brussels: CANON.

<sup>17</sup> Hadzigeorgiou, Y. – Fokialis, P. – Kabouropoulou, M. (2012). Thinking about creativity in science education. *Creative Education*, 3(5), 603–611.

<sup>18</sup> Brittain, W. (1979). *Creativity, Art, and the Young Child*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.

design, using art therapy, holding workshops and competitions, and bringing it a large number of students.<sup>19</sup>

It is important to reach students in their extracurricular time with various forms of group and individual educational work.<sup>20</sup> Arts and crafts work gives a great opportunity for professional awareness, familiarization with the creative laboratories of artists and professions of artistic production and traditional crafts, the development of which our country pays great attention to.

Parents and teachers have many opportunities to help children develop mentally, socially and emotionally. Art promotes creativity, builds self-confidence, and teaches task analysis and participation in group and individual work.

One of the goals of art education, whether in the home or school, is to make children more creative regardless of where their creativity will be used. Parents know that even siblings are highly individual. No two youngsters express themselves in the same way. Creativity brings out the child's personality. Viktor Lowenfeld,<sup>21</sup> in *Creative and Mental Growth*, says, "To suppress these individual differences, to emphasize the final product, to reward one youngster over another, goes against the basic premises of creative expression."

The problem is that few people engaged purposefully and consciously develop these skills in their children or students in general. All this is left unattended, to the discretion of the student or to chance. And the child who possesses great creative talents, who had great creative potential and who could manifest him or herself in a particular area, becomes ordinary and commonplace.<sup>22</sup>

This should be done in such a format where students will be tempted to do art because of their personal interest and because of a sense of teamwork, self-responsibility, and responsibility to classmates, friends and teachers. A pupil, like any person, aims for something new, original,

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<sup>19</sup> Выготский, Л. С. (1997). *Воображение и творчество в дошкольном возрасте*. Санкт-Петербург: Союз.

<sup>20</sup> Абдулханова-Славянская, К. А. (1988). *Активность и сознание личности как субъекта деятельности: Психология личности в социальном обществе*. Москва: Наука.

<sup>21</sup> Lowenfeld, V. (1957). *Creative and Mental Growth*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co, Inc.

<sup>22</sup> Бака, И. И. (1985). *Теоретические основы подготовки школьников к творческому труду в сфере материального производства*. Москва: Издательство Московского государственного педагогического института.

and extraordinary. People glance at familiar forms but stop at something unknown, even strange at first.

Even preschoolers, having understood and learned their toys, are not inclined to use them in their games. They try to apply and use them as another subject with other features not characteristic and intended for them originally. Therefore, the ability to create and understand art and beauty lies in the child from an early age, initially through nature.

Recently a lot of people have become ordinary, second rate, not seeking any constructive purpose – non-creative people. They are interested in computers, the Internet and technology. However, it is also necessary to develop creativity in a child in the first place for their own sake. Only a creative person can always find a way in extraordinary situations. It is necessary to develop creative skills at the pre-school age and we should deal more seriously with this problem at school age. It is here that the full identity of the child is developed.<sup>23</sup> The teachers' task is to help the child to develop their creative talents and become creative.

Often, children come to school and after a while they no longer want to go there. Do they lose their interest? How can we encourage schoolchildren to keep their creativity, their personality, how can we help them to become creative, extraordinary personalities, how can we help them to cope with their childish but no less important issues? If we remember what is particularly important for the formation of children's abilities, their feelings, and ability to think, we can help them to enable their fullest possible development. It is necessary to provide children with as many opportunities as possible and, of course, help them to join the world of creativity, imagination, fantasy, and art. Many educators and psychologists have considered creativity in different ways.

From a philosophical point of view this activity serves as generating something qualitatively new and interesting never having been done before. But from the point of view of psychology, creativity acts as a process of creating a new set of personal properties which promote children's involvement in the creative process. Acting as the abilities of an individual and being the subjective conditions for the successful implementation of creative activity, creativity is understood as pedagogical.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Levin, V. A. (1993). *Educating creativity*. Tomsk: Peleng.

<sup>24</sup> Андреев, В. И. (1988). *Диалектика воспитания и самовоспитания творческой личности*. Казань: Издательский Дом Казаньского Университета.

The following is referred to as creativity by psychologists: vigilance in search of problems, the ability to “curtail”, the ability to “clutch” (linking new information with the old), the ability to transfer, the willingness to give the right information, intelligence flexibility, speech fluency, ability to finishing something, and so on. Thus, creativity is a vital matter at all times. As mentioned above it is necessary to develop creative abilities from the pre-school age and more seriously to deal with this problem at school age as it is a more conscious age. It is here that the complete, versatile personality of the child is formed.

One of the pressing problems of extra-curricular activities that requires a timely solution is the development of creative abilities, and it is particularly important to ensure a successful start to children’s life at the school stage. In pre-school education in kindergartens, there are classes in Fine Arts, Arts and crafts, design, extracurricular activities such as a club called “Skilful hands” and others, where children are taught to work with different materials (clay, paper, natural materials, etc.). Modelling clay is a preparatory stage before working with papier-mâché.

Acquaintance with some handicrafts, particularly toys, certain types of utensils, paintings and decorative molding techniques available will have a positive impact on the comprehensive development of the individual child and will raise their aesthetic taste and creativity, ingrain in children the basics of spatial thinking, develop their fine motor skills, prepare the child's hand for more complex activities, and develop imagination.<sup>25</sup> With the same purpose children are taught creativity, or art with other materials which have their own specific functions provided by other technological expression of creative possibilities.

This is an initial and important step in feeling the interest in learning something new, in experiencing a sense of joy from the results of their work. At school, educational work with students in the classroom and extra-curricular activities on technology, fine arts, design, and decorative art, must be presented first in the curriculum, and then at the request of the children, we should invite them to sessions at a club on artistic material.<sup>26</sup> Work with clay and paper, etc., is often associated with hard, fine study of details, decorative compositions, so only the most diligent and hard-working children may be interested in this work and do it for a long period of time.

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<sup>25</sup> Астахов, А. И. (1986). *Воспитание творчеством: Книга для учителя*. Москва: Просвещение.

<sup>26</sup> Волков, И. П. (1985). *Приобщение школьников к творчеству*. Москва: Педагогика.

If younger students are taught the basics of craft – the first steps of working with clay, the older students are able to perform more complex work, to embody some decorative images of conventional materials. The principal aim is the need to develop creativity through understanding art. First, it is necessary to look at the development of creative abilities and methods of development of pupils' creativity at different ages. The task of teachers is to help the child to discover and develop his/her creative talents and capabilities, to become creative. To do this we should:

- introduce the main types of arts and crafts and reveal the complex nature of folk art
- develop the emotional responsiveness of children to works of decorative art
- form the basics of aesthetic perception
- contribute to the development of children's cognitive and creative activity in fine, decorative and artistic creativity
- intensify independent creative research in solving artistic problems
- engrain love towards work and towards their country

Creativity also can be an effective tool in psychotherapy. Most people think, "How is it possible to connect creativity with psychotherapy?" But it is. Since creativity is the means of human expression and reflection on the world surrounding us, psychologists use creativity to help children start a dialogue, to overcome stress, and explore the various aspects of their own personality. In this case, arts and crafts is a good way to achieve this goal.

In psychology, the use of creativity, artistic techniques for the treatment of mental disorders and the stabilization of the mental state of the person is referred to as art therapy.<sup>27</sup> In art therapy psychotherapeutic techniques integrate with the creative process to improve mental health. Recently the method of art therapy has frequently been used in training.

The aesthetic education of students is an ongoing process versatile by nature. Arts and crafts is one of these parts, and at the same time a means of art-therapy, using the creative process of creating a work of art to improve the physical, mental and emotional state of people of all ages.

This method is based on the belief that the creative process and artistic expression helps people to resolve conflicts and problems, to practise interpersonal skills, manage behaviour, reduce stress, increase

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<sup>27</sup> Никитин, Б. (1994). *Развивающие игры*. Москва: Знание.

self-esteem and achieve an understanding of ourselves. All this allows the teacher and the student to improve the educational process.

In the learning process most of today's children face several challenges that impede aesthetic education. The main task of the teacher is to help in overcoming the various human problems through art using the method of art therapy. The leading concept in this type of therapy is art and everything that is not associated with it must be swept aside. The use of art therapy in educational institutions remains an important question. On the one hand this is a fashionable innovation, which makes it possible for a relatively short period to obtain results, thanks to Western developments and domestic experts.<sup>28</sup>

In the traditional system of education there are such subjects as fine art, design and labour (technology), where the child acquires certain skills of drawing and modelling. Unlike art therapy, in the lessons children receive marks for their work in numerical terms, while in the classes in art therapy they do not receive evaluations such as: it is drawn, fashioned, cut, woven "well" or "bad". They have the right to speak on the progress of their work, the emotions, thoughts which they had during the work.

Interaction with paints, modelling clay, clay, paper, and different materials allows people to carry out the following tasks of the therapeutic and learning process:<sup>29</sup>

- secure operation with aggression;
- overcoming emotional problems;
- expression through creative thought and feeling that you cannot always express verbally;
- developing pre-school and primary school children's fine motor skills and colour perception;
- overcoming language barriers;
- encouraging interaction with other children.
- developing aesthetic perception.

The education system is always in the focus of public attention, and any responsible government is committed to its improvement.

However, the higher the educational standards and the heavier the workload, the more frequently teachers begin to experience increasing "burnout." Therefore, keeping the art method in different classes has a positive effect on learning, enabling them to more fully realize the

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<sup>28</sup> Полуянов, Д. (1985). *Воображение и способности*. Москва: Знание.

<sup>29</sup> Shusterman, M. N. (1994). *A tutor's "Cookbook"*. Norilsk.

potential of personal development. Similar lessons can improve self-esteem and help students control their behaviour. And this is very important because control of behaviour and emotions helps people make decisions, make the right choices and take responsibility for the subsequent results.

Setting goals of development of the creative abilities of the individual, you must clearly understand the qualities of the personality structure in all its complex diversity.<sup>30</sup> Understanding the personal identity of a young person allows us to create the necessary conditions for the opening and development of his or her creative abilities.

The teacher requires a deep understanding of the basic concepts characterizing the possibilities of the individual for successful design of his or her educational activities for the development of the creative abilities of students. It is necessary to understand the meaning and significance of the concepts of “ability” and “talent”. Sometimes the terms “capacity” and “talent” are closely related, and it is not always possible to distinguish them.

It should be understood that ability is a natural talent of being able and skilled to do something. It is known that the capacity cannot be reduced to human knowledge and skills only. They manifest themselves primarily in the speed, depth and mastery of methods and techniques in some activities and they are internal psychological adjustments, which are conditions of the possibility of their acquisition.<sup>31</sup>

The work on the development of students’ creative potential cannot ignore such phenomena as talent and genius.

Talent is a high level of ability. It is characterized by the product originality of the representative of any profession that requires creative problem solutions. In a particular field talent includes a number of abilities.

Genius is the highest degree of giftedness, which is expressed in work historically significant to society.

All these personal qualities to a certain extent are linked to each other. They are based on different abilities, high cognitive process level, motivation and orientation of the individual that allows goals to be achieved.

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<sup>30</sup> Выготский, Л. С. (1986). *Психология искусства*. Москва: Искусство.

<sup>31</sup> Чекмарёв, Н. П. (1982). *Уроки творчества*. Москва: Высшее образование.

## Conclusion

Creativity is an important human characteristic. It is perhaps best to think of it as a process, requiring a mixture of ingredients, including personality traits, abilities and skills. Early years staff can help young children to develop their creativity by providing a creative environment, helping children to build up their skills through play, behaving creatively themselves and praising children's creative efforts.

Schools and society must help our children develop to become happy, well-adjusted citizens, rather than pupils who can just pass a test and get through school. We must ensure that our children can think creatively, skilfully, and "outside the box". The arts are a vital part of doing this and of ensuring that every student can achieve his or her potential and contribute fully to our society. By considering how educators define and implement various strategies to develop creativity among their students, hopefully we will better be able to understand how creativity can be fostered through arts integrations at the primary-junior level.