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FOSTERING OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S COGNITIVE AND CREATIVE POTENTIAL DURING THE TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

A The article analyzes contemporary theoretical approaches and scientific research on the development of preschool children's cognitive and creative potential during the transition to school education. It has been established that this period is crucial for the formation of integrated cognitive and creative competencies necessary for successful learning and the child's social adaptation. The nature of cognitive and creative potential is defined as a holistic construct that encompasses the development of thinking, memory, attention, imagination, and creativity. Pedagogical conditions that ensure the effective development of this potential have been identified, in particular the use of play-based, inquiry-based, and artistic activities, the creation of an emotionally supportive educational environment, and ensuring continuity between preschool and primary education. The rationale for integrating cognitive and creative components in the process of school readiness is justified. National and international experience in implementing integrated approaches in the practice of preschool settings has been studied and compared. The results of scientific research and pedagogical practices in this field have been summarized. Recommendations have been developed for the organization of educational activities and the learning environment, aimed at fostering the comprehensive development of the cognitive and creative potential of older preschool children. It has been concluded that the systematic implementation of the outlined approaches contributes to the successful adaptation of children to school.

Keywords: cognitive and creative potential; preschool children; school readiness; cognitive development; creative development; integration of competencies; educational environment; school adaptation

АКТУАЛІЗАЦІЯ КОГНІТИВНОГО ТА ТВОРЧОГО ПОТЕНЦІАЛУ ДІТЕЙ ДОШКІЛЬНОГО ВІКУ В КОНТЕКСТІ ПЕРЕХОДУ ДО ШКІЛЬНОЇ ОСВІТИ

S Проаналізовано сучасні теоретичні підходи та наукові дослідження, присвячені проблемі розвитку когнітивно-творчого потенціалу дітей дошкільного віку в умовах переходу до шкільного навчання. Встановлено, що зазначений період є визначальним для формування інтегрованих когнітивних і творчих компетентностей, необхідних для успішної освітньої діяльності та соціальної адаптації дитини. Визначено змістові характеристики когнітивно-творчого потенціалу як цілісного утворення, що охоплює розвиток мислення, пам'яті, уваги, уяви та креативності. Виокремлено педагогічні умови, що забезпечують ефективний розвиток зазначеного потенціалу, зокрема використання ігрових, дослідницьких і мистецьких форм роботи, створення емоційно підтримувального освітнього середовища та забезпечення наступності між дошкільною і початковою освітою. Умотивовано доцільність інтеграції когнітивних і творчих компонентів у процесі підготовки дітей до школи. Вивчено та порівняно вітчизняний і міжнародний досвід упровадження інтегрованих підходів у практику закладів дошкільної освіти. Узагальнено результати наукових напрацювань і педагогічних практик у зазначеній сфері. Розроблено та запропоновано рекомендації щодо організації навчальної діяльності й освітнього середовища, спрямованих на комплексний розвиток когнітивно-творчого потенціалу дітей старшого дошкільного віку. Підсумовано, що системна реалізація окреслених підходів сприяє успішній адаптації дитини до шкільного навчання.

Ключові слова: когнітивно-творчий потенціал; діти дошкільного віку; підготовка до шкільного навчання; когнітивний розвиток; творчий розвиток; інтеграція компетентностей; освітнє середовище; адаптація до школи

Problem statement. The preschool age is extremely important for the formation of a child's cognitive and creative potential, since it is at this time that the foundations of thinking, memory, logic, and problem-solving skills are laid. These abilities allow the child to analyze information, draw conclusions, make decisions, and find non-standard solutions in new situations. Creative potential, in turn, contributes to the development of

flexible thinking, imagination, and the ability to generate new ideas, which ensures successful adaptation to changes and social integration.

Modern educational conditions, rich in digital flows and informational uncertainty, impose additional requirements. Children must learn to sort, analyze, and comprehend large amounts of information, as well as solve problems creatively.

In these conditions, the integration of cognitive and creative development is of strategic importance for the formation of thinking, imagination, and the ability to make non-standard decisions, which are the basis for future academic and social success [10, p. 88].

International experience demonstrates the effectiveness of approaches where learning takes place through active engagement, interaction, and creative problem solving. However, it does not reflect the full multidimensionality of pedagogical practice that has already been established in Ukraine. Domestic educational practice in the field of preschool and primary education is distinguished by its progressiveness, holistic approach, and consistent activities aimed at developing children's creative abilities. At the same time, it combines traditional and modern approaches, folklore and artistic practices, media and digital competencies, and game-based and research-based methods of teaching.

Understanding the cognitive and creative potential of preschoolers and the mechanisms of its formation allows us to identify pedagogical practices that most effectively contribute to the development of thinking, memory, imagination, and creative abilities. Approaches that combine cognitive and creative development are of particular importance, providing the opportunity for simultaneous analysis, comparison, decision-making, and the generation of new ideas. This integration forms a solid foundation for the child's future academic success, as the combination of thinking, imagination, and creativity allows them to effectively master the curriculum, adapt to complex tasks, and take an active role in the educational process.

Analysis of recent studies and publications. Recent studies by Ukrainian and foreign researchers indicate increased attention to the integration of cognitive and creative development in preschool children. Thus, H. Shklyaieva and T. Yatsenko [7] emphasize that the use of artistic practices in preschool education contributes to the development of both children's creative and cognitive competencies, as well as facilitates their adaptation to the new educational requirements of primary school. The authors emphasize that «the interrelated combination of artistic forms of activity and educational tasks stimulates thinking, imagination, and the ability to independently search for solutions» [right there, p. 23]. Theoretical approaches to the development of creative potential in preschool age have also been studied by L. Tarabasova, O. Khomych, and L. Klimova, who point out that «creative development is associated with the level of intelligence, creative abilities, convergent and divergent thinking» and is the basis of psychological readiness for learning [8, p. 90]. These results confirm the need for comprehensive educational systems that simultaneously develop cognitive functions and creative skills and provide integrated preparation for school. Domestic scientist V. Moliako [6], while researching the impact of the modern information environment on children's creative thinking abilities, emphasizes that «the development of preschoolers' creative thinking requires the creation of conditions for analysis, synthesis, and non-standard problem solving in the context of constantly changing information» [6, p. 52]. It confirms the need to integrate traditional and modern methods into

pedagogical practice. It should be emphasized that educators and practitioners point to the importance of using various types of art to develop preschool children. For example, scientific research by O. Mkrtichian [4; 5] proves that training educators to organize music classes develops a set of competencies that allow them to simultaneously develop children's attention, memory, and creative skills. At the same time, musical practice, including folk songs and rhythmic exercises, provides a harmonious combination of emotional, cognitive, and social development, allowing children to actively participate in the educational process and express themselves as creative individuals [5, p. 198]. International studies, including W. Wu & W. Wong [9], Children's Experience [2], and Z. Abdiyeva [1], confirm the effectiveness of integrated approaches in developing cognitive and creative potential. W. Wu and W. Wong emphasize that «structured game scenarios and project tasks create conditions for the development of children's critical thinking and adaptive skills» [9, p. 187]. Children's Experience research shows that emotional support and a safe environment where children can experiment build resilience to stress and self-regulation skills [2, p. 68]. Z. Abdiyeva notes that «the successful integration of cognitive, creative, and social competencies requires adaptation to local cultural and educational conditions» [1, p. 102].

An analysis of scientific publications by domestic and foreign scholars on the development of preschoolers' cognitive and creative potential suggests that integrated approaches combining the development of thinking, memory, imagination, and creativity are highly effective. Meanwhile, there is still room to dig deeper into certain aspects of this process in the Ukrainian education context, especially how cognitive and creative skills are combined when getting children ready for school and helping them adjust to new educational requirements. Therefore, it is necessary to systematize modern approaches with a focus on innovation and comprehensiveness of domestic preschool education, as well as to outline practical guidelines for teachers in developing preschool children's creative and artistic potential.

Research purpose is to identify the characteristics of preschool children's cognitive and creative potential development and outline effective pedagogical practices that ensure the integration of cognitive and creative development during the period of preparation for school, promoting the child's adaptation and future academic success. Achieving this purpose involves performing certain objectives. They are the following: analysis of theoretical approaches and scientific research on preschool children's cognitive and creative development; identification of mechanisms and conditions for the effective development of older preschool children's thinking, memory, attention, imagination, and creativity; analysis of international and domestic experience in integrating cognitive and creative competencies into the educational practice of preschool institutions; development of recommendations for the organization of educational activities and the educational environment that ensures the comprehensive development of children's cognitive and creative potential during the period of preparation for school.

Presentation of the main research material. The cognitive potential of preschool children is the foundation for successful learning and social adaptation. At this age, thinking, memory, logic, and problem-solving skills are actively developing, allowing children to analyze information, establish cause-and-effect relationships, and find their solutions in new situations. It is important to note that cognitive development does not occur in isolation. It is closely linked to the development of imagination, the ability to think abstractly, and a creative approach to problem solving, which is particularly evident in play and exploratory activities. Ukrainian educator M. Moliako emphasizes that «a child's cognitive development involves the integration of intellectual functions, memory, and the ability to think analytically and synthetically, which creates the basis for the formation of more complex learning skills» [6, p. 47].

The development of creative potential during this period is an integral part of a child's development. Creativity is not limited to drawing, singing, moving to music, or playing with building blocks. It encompasses the ability to generate new ideas, see unconventional solutions, and adapt to change. It is worth noting that «developing older preschool children's creative potential involves fostering their ability to generate new ideas, think flexibly, and solve problems independently in various areas of activity» [3, p. 102]. During various activities, children train not only their creativity, but also their ability to plan, analyze, and self-control, which ensures the gradual development of cognitive and creative abilities as a whole.

The period of preparation for school is particularly crucial, as it is when children prepare for the new demands of the educational environment. The continuity of preschool and primary education allows for a smooth transfer of acquired skills and knowledge, minimizing stress reactions and ensuring effective adaptation of «children to new educational requirements and the development of their cognitive and creative competencies» [7, p. 22]. At the same time, adaptability is closely linked to the development of emotional regulation and social competence. Children who are able to manage their own emotions find it easier to interact with adults and peers. It, in turn, supports their cognitive activity and creative aspirations [10, p. 87].

Thus, a preschooler's cognitive and creative potential is formed as an integrated system that encompasses thinking, memory, attention, imagination, and the ability to generate new ideas. Its development requires not only pedagogical support, but also the creation of a supportive environment where children can experiment, make mistakes, and find their own solutions. In today's world of information uncertainty and digitalization, the ability to think critically, adapt, and solve problems creatively is becoming a key competency that determines a child's success in further education and social life.

Understanding how preschool children's cognitive and creative potential is formed allows us not only to outline the internal mechanisms of the development of thinking, memory, attention, and imagination, but also to determine which educational practices are most effective for its actualization. It is the combination of cognitive and creative components in a child's activities that creates the basis for the development of

critical thinking, adaptability, and the ability to independently search for solutions. However, in order to understand how these approaches are implemented in different education systems and which practical strategies are most effective, it is advisable to refer to international experience.

The study of early education practices in foreign countries shows that the integration of cognitive and creative development, the active use of research and play activities, and attention to the child's social and emotional environment are key factors in the successful development of preschoolers. This experience allows us to see various models of organizing educational activities that can be adapted to the Ukrainian context while preserving national and cultural traditions and the principles of continuity between preschool and primary education.

Experience in early education abroad demonstrates a wide range of approaches to developing the cognitive and creative potential of preschool children. English and American researchers emphasize the importance of combining academic knowledge with practical activities, which allows children to acquire new information through interactive and research practices. In their works, W. Wu and W. Wong emphasize that «the use of structured game scenarios and project tasks creates conditions for the development of critical thinking and adaptive skills» [9, pp. 14-15]. Children do not simply follow instructions to complete tasks, but actively analyze, predict outcomes, and propose their own courses of action, which significantly increases the effectiveness of learning and promotes the development of creativity.

Children's Experience research shows that emotional support and creating a safe environment where children can experiment and make mistakes without fear of judgment are important aspects. This builds resilience to stress and self-regulation skills, which are necessary for further learning in conditions of informational uncertainty. The authors emphasize that «children's research and play activities in international programs are always combined with elements of social interaction, which stimulates the development of emotional intelligence» [2, pp. 67-70].

A case study of Central Asian countries, particularly the work by Z. Abdiyeva, demonstrates that a systematic combination of traditional values and modern pedagogical practices contributes to the formation of a harmonious personality. An approach focused on integrating cognitive, creative, and social competencies ensures both children's academic readiness and psycho-emotional stability. Z. Abdiyeva notes that «the successful implementation of new methods requires adaptation to local cultural and educational conditions, taking into account children's age characteristics and the level of teacher training» [1, pp. 102-104].

An analysis of international experience demonstrates the significant effectiveness of integrated approaches to developing preschool children's cognitive and creative potential. Yet, it does not cover all aspects of pedagogical practices that have already been established and are successfully functioning in Ukraine. The domestic system of preschool and primary education is distinguished by a high level of innovation, complexity, and a multi-level focus on developing children's creative potential.

Pedagogical science and practice in Ukraine is characterized by a synthesis of traditional cultural values and modern educational technologies, which allows for the simultaneous development of cognitive, social, and emotional competencies. Particular attention is paid to systematic approaches ranging from the targeted training of educators to the implementation of integrated educational strategies that stimulate thinking, memory, imagination, and the ability for creative self-realization. It contributes to the formation of a harmoniously developed, adaptive, and socially competent personality.

Understanding preschool children's cognitive and creative potential and the mechanisms of its formation allows us to determine which educational practices can most effectively contribute to the development of thinking, memory, imagination, and creative abilities. A child's intellectual resources remain potential until they are applied in activities that develop imagination, search skills, and self-expression. In this context, pedagogical approaches that integrate creativity and cognitive development are particularly important, as they enable children to analyze, compare, make decisions, and create new things simultaneously.

Musical and artistic creative practices are one of the most effective tools for developing cognitive and creative potential. Ukrainian educator A. Mkrtichian emphasizes that preparing teachers to develop children's musical abilities requires special methodological competence, which allows them to organize classes in such a way that musical activity simultaneously promotes the development of memory, attention, and creative thinking. In such an environment, children not only reproduce artistic images, but also master the skills of analysis, synthesis, and associative thinking, which are key components of cognitive activity.

The modern educational context, rich in digital and information flows, places new demands on the development of children's media literacy and digital competencies. Ukrainian psychologist S. Kuzma emphasizes that the formation of media literacy at an early stage is an essential element of creative thinking, as children learn to filter information, compare sources, evaluate the reliability of messages, and create their own interpretations [3, pp. 35-38]. The use of interactive technologies, multimedia presentations, educational applications, and simple programmable tools allows you to combine learning and play, develop problem-solving skills, and encourage experimentation and the creation of new content. This approach helps children learn to deal with uncertainty and encourages them to think outside the box.

Game-based and research-based methods play a specific role in the development of cognitive and creative potential. Game-based activities create conditions for free experimentation, situation modeling, testing of one's own ideas, and gaining safe experience in problem solving. According to L. Zdanevych et al. [10], project and research activities allow children to feel the results of their own activities and simultaneously develop cognitive and social competencies. «Creativity in preschool age is manifested in the productivity and originality of practical and verbal tasks. It also correlates with the child's adaptive

abilities» [10, p. 88]. Such methods develop children's critical thinking, self-control, and alternative decision-making skills, which form the basis for further education at school.

The comprehensive integration of pedagogical approaches, combining musical and artistic practices, media and digital competencies, gaming and research methods, ensures the harmonious development of cognitive and creative potential. Ukrainian educator N. Tarabasova notes that «the combination of cognitive and creative components in educational activities creates conditions for the comprehensive preparation of children for learning and social adaptation» [8, p. 90]. Pedagogical cases that are successfully implemented in preschool education institutions and in the New Ukrainian School demonstrate that integrated approaches not only increase children's thinking and creativity, but also contribute to the development of empathy, independence, and teamwork skills.

Thus, organizing an educational environment that provides for various types of activities and integrates cognitive and creative tasks creates conditions for the active development of thinking, memory, imagination, creativity, and adaptive skills. This approach fosters preschool children's intrinsic motivation for learning, the ability to independently search for solutions, and the ability to apply acquired knowledge in various life situations, laying the foundation for a successful transition to school and future academic success.

Taking into account the results of theoretical and practical research on preschool children's cognitive and creative development allows us to outline effective pedagogical strategies aimed at forming the child's holistic potential. The development of systematic approaches to the organization of educational activities and the creation of an appropriate educational environment aims to ensure the harmonious development of thinking, attention, memory, imagination, and creativity, as well as to prepare children for a successful transition to school.

We will provide recommendations that may serve as practical guidelines for educators and teachers regarding the comprehensive development of children's cognitive and creative potential during the period of preparation for primary school.

In order to ensure the comprehensive development of children's cognitive and creative potential during the period of preparation for school, it is advisable to apply an integrated pedagogical strategy that combines the development of cognitive functions and creative competencies. Classes should be planned in such a way as to simultaneously stimulate thinking, memory, attention, imagination, and the ability to generate new ideas, using tasks that involve analysis, comparison, decision-making, and a creative approach to problem-solving.

An essential element is the systematic use of various types of artistic activities, including music, theater, visual arts, and dance. Integrating art into educational tasks helps develop imagination, creativity, emotional intelligence, and expands children's cognitive potential.

Game-based and research-based methods remain an effective tool for developing cognitive and creative functions. They provide opportunities for experimentation, situation modeling, and testing of one's own ideas, as well as the

development of critical thinking, self-control, and social skills through project-based activities.

The educational environment should be safe and supportive, allowing children to take initiative, make mistakes without fear of judgment, and gain experience in self-regulation. Introducing exercises for emotional regulation and social interaction promotes stress resilience, empathy development, and readiness for new educational requirements.

The use of media and interactive technologies allows combining learning with gaming activities, forming skills of selection, analysis, and evaluation of information, which supports the development of critical and creative thinking.

Equally significant is the professional training of educators in the implementation of integrated approaches to teaching. Teachers must have the skills to combine cognitive and creative development and organize the learning process in such a way that the knowledge and skills acquired are smoothly transferred to primary school, ensuring the effective adaptation and success of children in the new educational environment.

Conclusions and prospects for further research. Thus, preschool children's cognitive and creative potential is formed as an integrated system that encompasses thinking, memory, attention, imagination, and the ability to solve problems

creatively, and is an important prerequisite for successful adaptation to school learning. An analysis of theoretical approaches has shown that modern pedagogical science considers cognitive and creative development to be closely interrelated, emphasizing the need for their integration into the educational process. Effective actualization of older preschool children's cognitive and creative potential is ensured through the use of play, research, and artistic activities, the creation of an emotionally safe educational environment, and targeted pedagogical support. A review of international and domestic experience has demonstrated the effectiveness of integrated approaches aimed at combining cognitive and creative tasks, developing critical thinking, creativity, and social-emotional competencies. Comprehensive organization of the educational environment during the period of preparation for school contributes to the formation of internal motivation to learn, increases the level of cognitive activity, and ensures a smooth transition for the child to a new stage of education.

Promising areas for further scientific research include studying the preparation of teachers for the implementation of comprehensive cognitive-creative approaches in the system of continuity between preschool and primary education.

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