

## **Instructive-Educational Strategies of Stimulating Creativity at the Small School**

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**Abstract:** Among the educational objectives, the stimulation of imagination and creativity must be a basic one, along with the education of thought. In the content of education, the general culture must be further promoted, this favoring creativity. Programs must provide special lessons for developing creative imagination. The extracurricular activity offers many opportunities for cultivating the imagination. Meetings with students of scientists and art can be initiated in the student circles who can talk about their work. Visiting exhibitions, excursions broaden the horizon and represent endless sources of questions. Creative thinking needs a rich material to operate with and to facilitate generalization. But it is not just the accumulation of knowledge, but especially their systematization, the acquisition of the internal structure of knowledge, the understanding of the mutual relations of objects and phenomena. Children's creativity is characterized above all by the intellectual, affective, motivational relationship that the subject brings in his action through his personal efforts. Each child gradually evolves into a specific individual structure of his or her creative potential, which largely delimits their personality.

**Keywords:** creativity; imagination; school; factors; personality; learning strategies

### **Developing and Educating Creativity in the Educational Process**

Creativity is the process that broadens the student's horizons of knowledge and gives them the opportunity to easily use their knowledge and even create something new. The activity of teaching the teacher / teacher is not limited only to the transmission of new knowledge, but it consists in organizing the student's learning activity,

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creating training situations, directing the student's learning activity, guiding, correcting and stimulating his activity.

Depending on how it is organized and oriented, the educational process can lead to the development of creative thinking, as it can unfortunately lead to the formation of a thought pattern.

If the teacher is satisfied with a textual reproduction, the students will not endeavor to present the material consulted in a personal form, to think about it, to seek original solutions. The teacher will thus contribute to educating a pattern thinking, to curb the development of critical spirit and creative thinking. The results will be better if the teacher stimulates through the qualifications granted, the individual study, the attempt to find original solutions, to interpret and apply the knowledge, to think independently. It has been considered that until now the school has been dealing less with the cultivation of creativity, that is why it was concluded that changes in the structure of Romanian education are necessary.

Among the educational objectives, the stimulation of imagination and creativity must be a basic one, along with the education of thought. In the content of education, the general culture must be further promoted, this favoring creativity. Programs must provide special lessons for developing creative imagination. The teacher must have friendly relationships with the students, encourage them, ask questions and not ironize them when they make mistakes. Schoolchildren must be able to express their curiosity.

There are different ways of developing creativity, for example: children are asked to develop a composition with a simple object in the center; a leaf, a button or a fence. In such procedures it is required: to ask as many questions as possible regarding known elements: "stone", "air", "stars", "fire", etc. More complex problems may be the requirement to formulate the moral that emerges from a complex imagination. Such processes favor the formation of a creative attitude and the ability to search and find problems.

More important are the specific methods in the direct relation with the characteristic aspects of each educational subject. Valuable teachers have always encouraged students to solve problems in different fields. Most problems force the child to find something new for him, which implies a dose of creativity. However, this is especially necessary in problems involving more than one solution. But the problematization implies that the students themselves find problems. In principle,

active methods involve efforts of observation and independent thinking, they appeal to the initiative of the students. The problems are not only in mathematics, but in any object. For example: in Romanian, in history, in geography, etc.

The extracurricular activity offers many opportunities for cultivating the imagination. Meetings with students of scientists and art can be initiated in the student circles who can talk about their work. Visiting exhibitions, excursions broaden the horizon and represent endless sources of questions.

Cultivating the innovative spirit also requires a fight with some parents, especially those who solve children's issues and does not let them do it through their own efforts. They must be convinced that excessive tutelage hinders intellectual development.

AlexandruRoșca shows that, "the main component of creative thinking is flexibility, which is understood to be a rapid change in the way of thinking, and when the situation requires it, the easy restructuring of the old cortical connections according to the requirements of the new situation, based on analysis and synthesis, making the transfer easy in solving problems.

The flexibility of thinking also develops in the process of enriching and systematizing knowledge. This aspect was highlighted in particular by I. A. Samarin, who indicates that one of the means that favors the mode of mental actions is the acquisition of varied knowledge about an object, as well as its generalization and varied use.

Creative thinking needs a rich material to operate with and to facilitate generalization. But it is not just the accumulation of knowledge, but especially their systematization, the acquisition of the internal structure of knowledge, the understanding of the mutual relations of objects and phenomena. Therefore, the teacher should encourage and assist students in acquiring richer and more varied knowledge, with which to operate and to apply them as often as possible. Numerous studies indicate that high school performance is not a sufficient guarantee of a high level of creativity afterwards. This is especially where the educational institution does not focus on the development of creativity.

An important role in the development of creativity is also the motivational factors. Many authors believe that motivation is a vital component of creativity. However, it seems that the optimal motivation is not the maximum motivation. In the process of solving problems, moderate motivation is the most effective.

### **Too Much Motivation can Slow down Problem Solving**

Creativity education is a continuous process that must be carried out throughout the school, taking into account all the cognitive and social factors. The development of this essential attribute of the personality of the contemporary man can be favored by the following conditions: the existence in school of well-equipped laboratories and workshops, of technical-scientific and literary artistic circles led by creative teachers, the school environment, materialized in the use of lessons and works. practices of heuristic methods and procedures.

Particularly important are the students' learning of processes of developing the creative imagination, the exercises of creativity at the conclusion of chapters or in the circles of students, the recognition and appreciation of the values created by the students, the existence of cooperative relations between teachers and students.

Children's creativity is characterized above all by the intellectual, affective, motivational relationship that the subject brings in his action through his personal efforts. Each child gradually evolves into a specific individual structure of his or her creative potential, which largely delimits their personality.

A modern learning process is required in such a way as to help students present their knowledge in a personal way, to seek original solutions "to group and hierarchize ideas. These are, in fact, the essential desires of educating creative thinking in students.

Morris Stein makes the following generic finding: "A society that stimulates creativity provides its citizens with four basic freedoms: freedom of study and preparation, freedom of exploration and investigation, freedom of expression, and freedom to be themselves."

Factors to stimulate the creativity of the small school

At the base of the creative process are three categories of factors:

- a) operational cognitive factors (intellectuals);
- b) personality factors (internal);
- c) social factors (external).

Operational cognitive factors (intellectuals)

The essential function of the original creation process is the imagination. For a while imagination was defined as a process of combining images, which is more in line with artistic imagination. But any creative process involves new combinations, new syntheses: in mathematics and physics, in science in general. New syntheses occur not only in the field of images or ideas, but also in the affective plane (the novelty of a poem comes not only from beautiful expressions, but from the way of experiencing in a sentimental plane a situation, an event). The imagination can be defined as that psychic process whose result is obtaining reactions, new psychic phenomena on the cognitive, affective or motor level.

Being the most important component of creativity, the qualities through which it manifests can be considered as the main characteristics of creativity. They are: fluidity, plasticity, originality. The main characteristic remains the originality, guaranteeing the value of the result of the creative work. The importance of the exercise realizes the role of another function in the structure of creativity - of memory. The volume of experience has a great influence on the possibilities of creation. Another factor that can influence a person's creativity is the level of thinking, his intelligence. Intelligence can be defined as "a general aptitude that contributes to the capacity building and cognitive adjustment of the individual in new situations". Of the intellectual factors involved in the creative act and which stimulate the creativity of students in primary education, creative intelligence and imagination are the most important, as they have the function of integrating the other cognitive operational factors of creativity. The creative imagination not only builds on the logical thinking patterns, but it uses the baggage of information and associations acquired through the mediation of intelligence and memory, the richer and more efficient the "warehouse" is larger. A number of students also underwent intelligence tests and creativity tests. These consist of samples requiring a variety of solutions (for example: children are asked to formulate all uses of a brick, except as a building element for a wall. Comparing the two series of results we have obtained correlation coefficients between 0,30 and 0,40 (the coefficient is 0 when there is no relationship and 1 when there is a total match), so there is a relationship between creative intelligence and imagination being far from a perfect match.

HJ Klausmeier and W. Goodwin show that in the creativity of children with the same level of intelligence, there is a wide variation, but that we should not expect those with lower and middle coefficients to be as creative as those with higher intelligence coefficients. It is known that there are indeed intelligences capable of easily understanding and operating with abstract relations, but which are non-creative.

However, sterility is not a consequence of the special development of intelligence, but of the absence or insufficiency of other attributes specific to creativity, it is the result of the excessive functioning of the too strong critical spirit developed in relation to the very small extent of the creative fantasy, for example, or with weak development of independence of thought, originality, etc. The wings help the albatross to fly but prevent it from going on land, but not because of its absolute size, but because the legs and the rest of the body are too small in relation to them. Intelligence helps the child to understand and work with abstractions, eventually finding the appropriate solution to certain problems, but if the rest of the skills needed for creation will be poorly developed, it will not be sufficient for the creative activity.

The creative imagination consists in the elaboration of new images based on the processing of the previous data. Some investigations carried out in this field reveal the presence of a correlation between imagination and intuitive thinking. In contrast to analytical thinking, intuitive thinking suddenly comes to the solution of a problem, often skipping some intermediate steps.

The creative imagination is a fundamental factor of creativity, as it realizes the fusion of information in new structures by merging, transforming and unifying images, objects and phenomena into a new meaning. A particularly important factor in the creative imagination is intuition. "Intuition involves the act of grasping the meaning, significance or structure of a problem or situation without explicit support on the appropriate analytical apparatus." In students the intuition consists in the quick reorganization and synthesis of previous experience in anticipating or suddenly appearing the solution of the problem, as a result of the free play of the imagination or of a shortened reasoning without trial and error.

A superior form of the creative imagination is ingenuity, completed in finding simple, surprising and original solutions, or working techniques with a high degree of efficiency. Originality is the expression of novelty, innovation, when we want to test this quality of a student, it can be seen by the statistical rarity of an answer, of an idea (of course we think of the rarity of something useful). This feature has a great significance in primary education because it guarantees the result of the creative work.

The flexibility of transformation put into evidence by Guilford and identified with divergent thinking is, according to some authors, the most important factor of creativity. It allows the free play of the imagination by placing things in a new

perspective, by renouncing the old hypotheses and formulating others based on combining, reorganizing, transforming and generalizing the information, discovering new links and more solutions to solve the researched problem. Although originality is the most specific feature of creative thinking, it is conditioned by flexibility and facilitated by fluency (associativity). The conditions between the three factors: flexibility, originality and fluency, are in fact reciprocal, without them having all the same weight in the process of creation. The intellectual factors of creativity cannot act independently of each other; they are not self-reliant, but dependent on the personality of the subject, primarily not the factor, but the person in its unity.

### **Personality Factors (Internal)**

The superior modalities, the aspiration level, the will, the interests, the emotional traits, the intellectual and attitudinal feelings, correlated with the temperament and the special aptitudes, orient and energize the creativity considerably increasing its efficiency. Inventory of personality traits raises many problems of methodological nature since at school age they are in continuous formation and transformation, they cannot be isolated and measured quantitatively. The latest research converges to recognize the increasing role of these factors in various fields of student creation. Human activity in general is that of learning and knowledge, in particular they are based on certain internal mobiles that trigger, support and guide the respective activity. Pedagogical psychology and pedagogy highlight the interdependence between development and learning: learning is the continuous process that produces development.

Through learning, the child assimilates and internalizes the socio-cultural values that objectify human capacities, transforms them into content and organization of his own psychic life. In turn, development influences and conditions learning; influences the understanding and accomplishment of the learning tasks and conditions the content and the difficulty of the learning. Learning is completed and completed in development, and development makes learning possible. Within these motivational elements we can include the tasks (of exploration, knowledge, achievement, self-realization, independence), curiosity, interests, aspiration level, etc. In their turn, creative attitudes are after G. Allport, learned availabilities that ensure a consistent, favorable or unfavorable response to an object or object class. Positive attitudes intensify the subject-task relationship, facilitating the use of intellectual - aptitude

components. The most important attitudes that specifically contribute to creative development are those that predispose individuals to react favorably to new and innovative ideas, and stimulate them to engage in imaginative behavior. Paul Popescu –Neveanu, based on his own researches carried out on innovators and inventors, concludes that the distinctive note of the creative subjects resides in attitudes. Attitudes are bipolar; creative attitudes allow optimal utilization of skills and knowledge in the creative course, and the opposite ones block the development of skills and knowledge. Of the temperamental affective traits we can mention those that refer to the affective balance, introversion-extraversion, impulsivity, instability, the force of the ego. An important place in the constellation of personality factors is held by the characteristic ones. In this regard we list such features as:

- the tendency of affirmation;
- self-confidence (cause and effect of creativity);
- perseverance;
- sociability;
- egocentrism; ambition;
- meticulously; ingenuity;
- ability to think abstractly;
- sensitivity to problems;
- superior general intelligence;
- openness to experience;
- the willingness to assume self-imposed or distant goals;
- the need to achieve something;
- independence in thinking, etc.

The most important reasons for the students' creation are the desire to know, to discover, to solve different problems of their age, removing the difficulties, then the satisfaction of the discovery, the desire for self-realization, the affirmation among the children, of satisfying some material and spiritual needs.

The student from the first two classes expresses creative desires, fantasies in execution in drawing, modeling, collages and less in the realization of texts or

problems (compositions). It shows a high critical spirit towards its own products, because it evaluates them more severely from a realistic point of view. However, fantasy begins to find new areas of exercise.

Gradually, after eight to nine years, the ability to compose, the ability to tell stories, to create stories, poems, storytelling, action plot, local color, the ability to use literary descriptive elements is formed. Due to the level of aspiration, achievement, by the age of nine, drawing becomes more loaded with "atmosphere". The cliches of trees, houses, people become starting points for individualization of themes, the technique of elementary rendering of perspective and of the superimposed (covered) drawing of the objects in the drawing are gained.

Creative styles and skills are beginning to manifest on these planes. School holidays, creative circles of different types become topical concerns.

In the school classes in which teachers with experience and personal culture work, creativity is evident in the child.

All this creates a complex training of the multilateral psychic capacities but also different conditions of training numerous skills of inventiveness, of the training of creative strategies and techniques and intelligence that actively supplement the psychic development.

### **Social Factors (External)**

Both the scientist and the artist are under the strong influence of the environment, especially the social one. The motivation, aspirations of a person are highly dependent on the demands of the society in which it has developed.

The creative activity is stimulated by the existence of a social-economic and cultural-scientific environment that ensures the formation of creative personalities, allows the freedom of creation, recognizes and applies the created values. The economic-social conditions and the psychosocial context in which the human personality is integrated are considered. Their role is expressed in that they offer, in a concentrated form, everything that has been achieved so far, generating new problems and question marks through their stimulative or inhibitory effect on the creative personality. The general attitude of the school towards the creative phenomenon is expressed by the measures taken in the direction of encouraging creative manifestations. These educational measures circumscribe the strategy of promoting creativity.

There are numerous training classes, experimental in schools. The forms of divergent thinking are trained in this way, favored by the lessons in which an atmosphere of emulation is created, a game for searching words, starting with a given syllable or ending with a certain one, moments of sentence construction, etc. Riddles, clever games, problem constructions, etc., are the ground on which creativity develops. Another area of its development is dictated by practical activities, activities in circles, etc. The stimulated child from the outside is eager and able to build “small boats with engines or sails, gliders, helicopters, etc., after about nine years.” However, the games incorporate new forms and incite instrumental creativity for the game.

When it comes to creativity, there is no distinction between the creativity of the child and that of an authentic creator in the light of the novelty of the result. This capacity can be developed in any person to a greater or lesser degree depending on the interaction of the factors that compete with its appearance and expression. A strong influence on the predecessor students, their teachers: Socrates influenced Plato, J. Haydn L. van Beethoven. Even if the disciple departs from the initial models, they played a special role in the initial phase of their preparation.

Creativity thus appears to us as a complex formation that results from the uniting in a unique way within the personality of each individual of factors of different nature.

### **The Concept of Instructional-Educational Strategy**

The strategy involves a way of approaching a specific training situation, both from the psychosocial point of view (relationships and interactions) and from the psychopedagogical point of view (motivation, personality, learning style, etc.) - the psychopedagogical representations and beliefs of the framework teaching are key elements in the construction of the strategy.

Through the strategy, the contents of the training are rationalized, determining at the same time action structures relevant to the achievement of the preset objectives.

The strategy has a multilevel structure:

- training methods;
- means of training;
- forms of training organization;

- instructional interactions and relationships;
- the instructional decision.

The strategy is part of the training optimization process, being a functional way of managing the instructional resources in order to meet the efficiency and effectiveness criteria of the process. According to Professor Eugen Noveanu, the determining elements that support the efficiency of the strategic design act are:

- representation of the teacher on the educational process;
- the objectives of the instructional situation;
- the structure and nature of the content units;
- the type of learning;
- teaching style;
- psychosocial characteristics of the partners;
- ergonomics of the school space;
- training time.

The construction of the training strategies consists in the capacity of the teaching staff to exploit to the maximum the material, psychological, educational resources that has an instructional situation.

A creative teacher interested in developing the student's creative potential will prepare him / her for future creative endeavors through: new expressions, new products, unusual social value. On the one hand, he must form logical, rational thinking: on the other, he must develop fluency and freedom of mind. Here we do not see a dilemma, let alone an impossible one to solve, because no one demands simultaneity. The education of critical thinking and the education of creativity can be achieved although they are not completely excluded from each other.

The attitude of the creative teacher in his / her relationship with the students is particularly important; he must identify the students with higher creative potentials, who are naturally given special possibilities to develop their abilities, to cultivate the imaginative readiness of the whole class using methods appropriate to this major objective.

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