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Innovative Approaches To Developing Creative Skills In Teachers (On The Example Of Advanced Training Courses)

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Abstract: This article examines the development of creative skills in professional development training within the continuing education system. The study highlights global trends in education, the requirements of the UN Sustainable Development Goal 4, and current national policies in Uzbekistan aimed at improving teachers' professional competence and fostering innovative pedagogical approaches. The theoretical section analyzes psychological and pedagogical interpretations of creativity, factors influencing the formation of creative capacity, and classical as well as contemporary scholarly views on creative thinking. Empirical data were obtained using Ye.E. Tunik's "Personal Creativity Diagnostics" method, applied to participants of professional development courses. The results indicate that while most participants demonstrate a considerable degree of creative potential—such as openness to novelty, experimentation, and imaginative thinking—certain conservative attitudes and limitations in self-expression persist. The article analyzes creativity through four perspectives: as a product, as a process, as a cognitive ability, and as a self-activation mechanism. Based on the findings, the paper concludes that integrating innovative and reflective teaching methodologies, strengthening psychological support, and implementing productive creative tasks are essential for enhancing creative and innovative competencies among professional development trainees.

Keywords: Creativity, professional development, pedagogical innovation, creative thinking, teacher training, psychological factors, diagnostic methodology, lifelong learning, reflective teaching, educational modernization.

Introduction: Education systems around the world are developing in accordance with global transformations. These changes are primarily associated with educational methodologies and pedagogical approaches. Therefore, the professional development system must prepare teachers to meet not only national but also global educational requirements. Creative thinking, openness to innovation, and the application of modern teaching methods are among the key factors that ensure learners' competitiveness and success in today's global labor market. The structure, implementation, and effectiveness of various international educational programs serve as evidence of this argument.

Within the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, SDG-4 (Quality Education) emphasizes the need for continuous professional development of all teachers and their familiarization with modern teaching practices [1]. According to Target 4.c, "by 2030, it is necessary to substantially increase the supply of qualified and competent teachers through improved training, recruitment, and support mechanisms across all levels of education" [2]. This goal aims to establish conditions for developing and maintaining highly qualified, competent teaching staff in every country worldwide.

In response to these global priorities, numerous international educational programs and regulatory frameworks have been adopted. In this regard, Uzbekistan's education system—especially the professional development of pedagogical personnel—has been recognized as one of the priority directions of national policy. This position is clearly reflected in the speech delivered by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, on October 24, 2018, at the meeting dedicated to "Further development of

higher education, improving the quality of personnel training, and expanding the integration of science, education, and industry" [3]. In his address, the President critically noted the mismatch between the education system and labor market demands, calling for the cultivation of innovative thinking and the implementation of creative pedagogical approaches among teachers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The analysis of the reviewed literature shows that the formation of a well-rounded young generation primarily depends on the education system and, more specifically, on teachers who perform effectively within their professional sphere. When a teacher possesses creative qualities, the learner's development and worldview are shaped within an intellectually stimulating environment. A creative educator, therefore, contributes directly to the formation of a capable and innovative student personality.

Psychologists note that the ability to approach problem-solving creatively and non-traditionally is not always an immediate outcome of education or special training. Rather, it often reflects individual personality characteristics. Undoubtedly, personal traits form the basis of one's creative abilities; however, it would be inaccurate to assume that special training plays only a secondary role in their development. Instead, an individual evolves through professional preparation, during which professionally significant qualities become more refined. As a result, creative abilities manifest in practical activity, giving rise to personal creativity as an integrated outcome of this developmental process.

Turning to the emergence of the term creativity in scientific discourse, it was first introduced into psychological and pedagogical research by D. Simpson, who defined it as a "non-standard method of thinking" [4]. The concept became widespread in Anglo-American psychology during the 1960s, referring to an individual's capacity to generate new ideas and develop novel skills.

J. P. Guilford identified several individual cognitive abilities that characterize creativity, including flexibility of thought, originality, curiosity, the ability to formulate hypotheses, and imagination [5]. To fully understand the essence of developing creative qualities in an individual, it is essential to first clarify the meaning of the term creativity. The concept may be interpreted as follows: Creativity (from Latin and English create — to create, creative — creative, inventive) [5] refers to an individual's readiness and ability to generate new ideas and is considered an independent component within the broader structure of giftedness.

The popularity and scientific relevance of the term increased rapidly across disciplines, particularly within the social sciences and humanities, where diverse definitions and evaluative criteria were proposed. In philosophical studies, creativity is often viewed as a characteristic related to the human capacity for abstract and critical thinking.

In the system of psychological sciences, creativity has generally been studied from two perspectives: as the psychological process of creating new things, and as the set of personal characteristics (abilities, motives, knowledge, skills) that ensure an individual's participation in this process. Accordingly, the well-known American psychologist Abraham Harold Maslow, based on his research, divides creativity into two types: the creativity of talent and the creativity of self-actualization. Since the creativity of self-actualization is inherently connected with the individual, we encounter it in everyday life and in many fields of professional activity.

The well-known psychologist P. Torrance developed a test for determining individual creativity; in addition, he approaches the concept of creativity as follows:

- putting forward scientific hypotheses related to a problem;
- testing and modifying the scientific hypothesis;
- identifying the problem on the basis of forming decision results;
- sensitivity to contradictions between knowledge and practical actions in the process of finding a solution.

From this, it becomes clear that the scholar, based on his scientific views, developed criteria for creative characteristics related to the individual. Moreover, according to another group of psychologists, the ability to apply creative, non-traditional approaches in solving problems is not always a direct result of education and special training, and to a greater extent reflects the personal characteristics of the individual [6]. Undoubtedly, the individual characteristics of learners form the basis of their creative abilities; however, we cannot agree that special training based on the inner motivation of the individual plays an almost tertiary role in their development. The reason is that the individual is shaped accordingly in the process of professional preparation, and therefore his or her professionally significant characteristics acquire a more complete form and are interpreted as one of the outcomes of education.

Such a specialist can be trained by combining the efforts of the teacher and the trainee studying in the

professional development system. For this, moderator-teachers are required to improve their practical preparation through the use of innovative technologies and to fundamentally restructure the structure, methods, and forms of trainees' professional development activities toward independent work. In this way, the necessary quality in preparing trainees with creative potential is ensured, forming their ability to acquire knowledge, to use this knowledge independently, and to supplement and continuously enrich it.

Pedagogical research shows that human thinking and creativity are closely interconnected. The Russian psychologist Andrey Vladimirovich Brushlinsky stated that any person's thinking is always (at least minimally) creative [7]. Creativity—interpreted as the ability to identify problems and provide solutions, generate numerous ideas, demonstrate flexibility and originality, and engage in analysis and synthesis of problems—was revealed by J. Guilford.

The creativity of an individual manifests itself in various spheres of human activity through the presence of contradictions, problematic tasks, social and personal significance, and the novelty and uniqueness of a process or result (V. I. Andreev) [8]. According to A. Maslow, creativity is considered a special type of intellectual ability inherent in everyone, but it is a specific direction that gradually declines in a person's activity under the influence of the environment.

According to the data (youth psychology), children up to the age of six possess 40% creative potential. It turns out that children are highly inclined toward creativity and inventiveness from a very early age [9]. If the educational process conducted with them at this stage relies solely on traditional approaches, their inclination for creativity gradually fades. Hence, based on this information, we can confirm Maslow's views. By nature, every person has an inherent inclination toward creativity and internal creative potential; under properly guided education and environmental influence, this quality may either develop or disappear.

In her doctoral dissertation, Z. T. Nishonova analyzes numerous definitions of creativity and constructs a model of creative thinking. She emphasizes that "creative thinking must be carried out on the basis of imagination, perception, knowledge, skills, thought, respect, and motivation" [10]. If an individual initially possesses only a minimal level of creative thinking ability, it can later be developed to an ideal state through internal and external factors. With this in mind, Z. T. Nishonova lists the motivations that foster an individual's creativity.

External factors that develop an individual's creativity refer primarily to the educational process and the participation of the teacher who organizes it. The reason is that, based on the knowledge and information acquired during the educational process, a person can develop themselves and improve personal characteristics in a positive direction.

According to the well-known Russian scholar Tokareva, "active pedagogical activity always possesses a creative character, and its adequate subject is a creative personality—the teachers" [11]. From this viewpoint, both the organizer of the educational process and its participants can be considered individuals inclined toward creativity.

If the activity of a teacher-pedagogue does not carry a creative character, they become merely a transmitter of information and a distributor of new knowledge. However, when the teacher integrates creativity into their activity, incorporates their own personal qualities, freely applies innovative technologies in their teaching, and encourages learners to explore from different angles by using uncommon methods in the learning process, then through such actions the teacher continuously demonstrates personal and professional creativity.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological basis of the study includes general scientific and pedagogical principles, such as: systematization, historicity, didactics, dialectics, activity and cultural relevance, continuity in the learning process within the education system, variability of teaching methods and forms, problem-oriented approach, interconnection, the unity of educational practice and theory, and the integration of general and specialized training in higher education institutions. It was deemed appropriate to use analyses obtained through online surveys, questionnaires, and an andragogical approach, based on pedagogical and psychological principles, for the development of a creative pedagogical personality.

To determine the level of development of creative skills in participants of professional development programs, we initially aimed to assess the existing state using Ye. E. Tunik's "Personal Creativity Diagnostics" method. This methodology was applied with participants enrolled in the historical direction of professional development courses.

RESULTS

The results are presented based on participants' responses regarding their personal creative potential and abilities. The questionnaire consisted of 51 items, and the answers were categorized as "Agree," "Disagree," "Partially Agree," and "Difficult to Answer."

The overall analysis is as follows:

General Trends: Most responses reflected creative traits such as creative thinking, striving for novelty, and initiative in problem-solving. The proportion of agreement exceeded 40% in most questions, and in some cases exceeded 70%, indicating a certain level of creative potential among participants.

Interest in Novelty and Exploration:

- 79.8% of participants enjoy studying things in detail to discover new ideas (Question 2).
- 61% expressed high interest in conducting experiments (Question 27).
- 48.8% enjoy trying new things to understand results (Question 44).
- Conversely, 16.7% believe "it is better to do everything as usual" (Question 9), indicating a small group resistant to novelty.

Problem-Solving and Persistence:

- 58.3% try to make an educated guess when they do not know the correct answer (Question 1).
- 53.6% continue their efforts until they achieve success (Question 7).
- However, 41.5% do not explore other alternatives once they find a solution (Question 28), which may hinder creative exploration.

Imagination and Creative Fantasy:

- 70.2% enjoy imagining what needs to be learned or done (Question 6).
- 47.6% are interested in imagining events that have never occurred to them (Question 13).
- 48.1% enjoy thinking about things that no one else has imagined (Question 46).
- 35.4% imagine themselves as the main character while reading a book or watching a film (Question 30).

Social Activity and Communication Inclination:

- 54.8% enjoy constantly making new friends (Question 12).
- 51.2% like discussing their ideas with friends (Question 21).
- However, a negative attitude toward public speaking is observed (Question 29), with 32.9% stating, "I have never liked it."

Resistance and Conservative Approach:

- 36.9% prefer following usual practices rather than trying new approaches (Question 9).
- 58% of parents and teachers prefer things never change (Question 34). This suggests the presence of conservative-minded individuals, which may hinder the development of creativity.

The analysis indicates that the majority of participants are highly interested in novelty, creative thinking, and experimentation. However, in some cases, conservative attitudes, fear, and resistance to change are observed. Additionally, some respondents demonstrate passivity in self-expression, such as public speaking or sharing ideas. Based on these findings, it is recommended to integrate innovative-reflective methodological approaches into professional development programs, establish a psychological support system, implement productive creative tasks to foster independent thinking and creative potential, and organize experimental learning activities to enhance participants' creativity.

DISCUSSION

The methodological positions proposed by scholars were taken as the foundation for assessing creative potential through this methodological survey. Specifically:

- **General Effectiveness Index** – defined as the ratio of the number of responses to the number of tasks. This indicator serves as the primary criterion for determining the participant's level of creative activity.
- **Originality Indicator** – reflects the uniqueness of individual responses in relation to the total number of responses. It is calculated based on the relative value of responses according to their frequency in the sample. This metric is essential for evaluating the originality of responses and the ability to diverge from standard thinking.
- **Uniqueness Index** – determined as the ratio of non-repeated (unique) responses to the total number of responses in the sample. This index is a crucial measure for assessing the exclusivity of creative ideas and the potential for generating novel concepts.

These indicators provide precise, scientifically grounded criteria for analyzing participants' personal creative potential and serve as a reliable method for evaluating individual creative opportunities within professional development programs.

Based on these results, the development of participants' creative skills was studied along the following directions:

1. **Creativity as a characteristic of the created product** – focusing on the quantity, quality, and significance of creative outputs relative to the object of study.
2. **Creativity as a process** – examining the stages, duration, and dynamics of creative activity rather than solely the creation of an objective or ideal product;

various stages, levels, and types of creative thinking are identified.

3. **Creativity as an ability** – analyzed as an inherent skill or capacity of the individual.

4. **Creativity as a competence from a psychological perspective** – linked to the process of self-activation and self-development, emphasizing the creativity of a self-activated specialist.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we analyzed the significance of professional development in fostering professional growth and examined the effectiveness of training sessions. The findings suggest that professional development should aim to cultivate participants as versatile, competitive specialists while enhancing existing competencies and activating intrinsic motivation and creative skills.

As a general conclusion from the reviewed studies, creativity can be defined as the readiness to adapt and apply acquired knowledge and skills to various non-standard situations based on internal motivation. The methodological surveys conducted with participants allowed us to determine their initial state and provided guidance for the subsequent stages of professional development,7 confirming our scientific hypotheses.

Thus, developing participants' creative and innovative skills primarily requires conscious, practice-oriented learning conditions, serving both as a means of comprehending educational content and promoting comprehensive personal growth. Creativity in the professional sphere manifests as a characteristic, allowing participants to adapt to work conditions, achieve professional self-development, and form an individual approach to activity. The higher the creative potential and the greater the variability of choices, the higher the likelihood of selecting optimal solutions for specific situations, thereby increasing both professional and educational productivity.

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