

SZKOLENIE NAUCZYCIELA DO EDUKACJI PODSTAWOWEJ

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Streszczenie. Celem pracy jest zwrócenie uwagi na nowoczesne naukowe podejście do interpretacji pojęć „umiejętność”, „kreatywność”, „nauczanie twórcze poprzez edukacji podstawowej” oraz analizy porównawczej teoretycznych podstaw relacji między tymi pojęciami, które są dość dynamicznymi i zmienia się pod wpływem badań, programów instytucjonalnych, kontekstów krajowych i wartością kulturowych. W artykule podkreśla główne trendy „Nowej Szkoły Ukrainkiej”. Wyniki badań doświadczalnych wskazują obiektywne potrzeby nowoczesnej edukacji w określaniu sposobów organizowania procesu tworzenia zdolności twórczych uczniów szkół podstawowych jako podstawa skutecznej własnej tożsamości w kolejnych etapach kształcenia. Autor koncentruje się na gotowości nauczycieli do rozwijania twórczych umiejętności uczniów szkół podstawowych w kierunku ich rozwoju. Przygotowanie nauczycieli i ich ciągły rozwój zawodowy są ważnymi czynnikami, do wspierania i poprawy standardów nauczania kreatywności w szkole podstawowej. Dane zebrane za pomocą ankiet, wywiadów i obserwacji w klasie, wykazała poważne problemy krajowego systemu edukacji. Doświadczenia zdobyte podczas praktyk szkolnych, głęboka wiedza pedagogiczna, znajomość kreatywnych metod nauczania i umiejętność ich zastosowania w praktyce są uznawane za kluczowe, wartościowe i użyteczne doświadczenie w kształtowaniu i rozwijaniu gotowości nauczyciela dla przyszłych nauczycieli do kreatywnego uczenia się umiejętności czytania i pisanie, codziennie na zajęciach w klasie.

Słowa kluczowe: kreatywność, edukacja podstawowa, nauczanie twórcze poprzez edukacji podstawowej, kształcenie ustawiczne, przygotowanie nauczycieli, Nowa Ukrainka Szkoła.

TEACHERS' PREPAREDNESS FOR TEACHING LITERACY CREATIVELY

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Abstract. The study aims to provide insight into the modern scientific approaches to the interpretation of the concepts of «literacy», «creativity», «teaching creativity through literacy» and comparative analysis of the theoretical background of the correlations between these

concepts, which is quite dynamic and varies under the influence of scientific research, institutional programs, national context and cultural values. The article elucidates the main trends of the project «New Ukrainian School». The results of experimental studies point out to the objective need of modern education in determining the ways of organizing the process of forming the creative abilities of junior pupils, determined as the basis for effective self-realization of the individual at further stages of ongoing education. The author lays emphasis on the issues of teacher's preparedness to forming creative skills from the first steps towards mastering it. The key findings of the study confirm that high quality pre-service teacher's education and continuous professional development are important requirements for maintaining and raising standards in teaching creativity at primary school. The data collected through surveys, interviews, and visual representations revealed the burning issues of reforming the national system of education and provided solid basis for working out recommendations how to improve it, taking into account the experiences of leading European countries. Practice experiences, pedagogical knowledge alongside with the content knowledge, awareness of the creative methods of teaching literacy skills and the ability to utilize them in practice are recognized as key, valued and beneficial experiences in the formation and development of teacher's preparedness for teaching and learning literacy creatively in every day classroom activities.

Key words: creativity, literacy, teaching creativity through literacy, ongoing education, teacher's preparedness, New Ukrainian School

Introduction. The creativity in education throughout the world is considered nowadays to be the issue of global importance. It is the crucial, inspiring and the most influencing aspect of teaching and learning educational policy as it is shaping the possibilities of the 21st-century learners. The way creativity is understood, nurtured, and linked with real-world challenges has significantly changed. It concerns firstly the ways contemporary scholars and educators are approaching creativity in schools. Nevertheless, according to Anne Harris, there is a gap between policies and practices. «EU education fails to keep pace with the creative and digital economies. This is mainly because teachers are not prepared for fully exploiting the potential of technologies and to adopt pedagogical strategies that foster creativity» (Harris, A., De Bruin, L. (2018).

The project «New Ukrainian School» is a key reform of the Ministry of Education and Science in Ukraine. The main goal is to create a school in which it will be a pleasure to study and which will give schoolchildren not only knowledge, as it is now, but also develop the ability to apply them in life (*Derzhavnyi standart pochatkovoï osvity... , Nova ukrainska shkola*). According to the conception of the New Ukrainian School, the main and decisive goal of the national education system reforming, in general, is introduction of the innovative technologies into the organization of the educational process, aimed at the formation and development of the basic skills for lifelong learning. The authors-creators of the concept argue that according to the experts forecasts, in the labor market of 2020 the ability to study throughout life, think critically, set goals and achieve them, work in team, communicate in the, multicultural environment will be the most demanded skills of the applicants. The Ukrainian school nowadays does not prepare its students for this. This is the major reason for reforming the whole national system of education, having changed the conceptual approaches to it. Creative, transformation-critical literacy will help students to develop the skills of asking questions, participation in discussion, to understand and solve creatively the issues of individual and social value yet in the primary school.. It is quite obvious that only a creative and competent teacher can form and develop such skills and, what is even more important, to teach creative credentials from the first steps towards mastering it. *The creative teaching of literacy involves the use of different methods and*

techniques that teach students how to solve the posed problems in a creative manner (Katarina Aladrović Slovaček, Željka Sinković and Nikolina Višnjić).

The new school needs a new teacher who can become an agent of changes. The reform provides a number of incentives for personal and professional growth, in order to attract the best to the profession. The effectiveness of implementation of the New Ukrainian school conception strongly depends on the teacher's proficiency, desire, strong will and ability to implement new ideas into the every day classroom activities. We believe teachers, not curricula or conceptions, teach children literacy. Therefore the level of teacher's preparedness for this hard job has been chosen the subject matter of this study.

The goal of this research is to argue the methods and techniques of teaching creative thinking through literacy, the issues of how to educate teachers to prepare them for effective formation of the main creativity-based skills. For this project the following skills of creativity have been identified as the principal ones: openness, curiosity, critical thinking, flexibility, originality and initiative, ability to associate, motivation and self-confidence. These principles were used in the formation of the self-assessment questionnaire about teachers' understanding of creativity in teaching literacy. Thus, to achieve the goal of the research we were to seek out the answers to the questions (*the tasks that lead to the goal*): how development of creativity in teaching young learners literacy is understood and taught in modern Ukrainian primary school; teacher's attitudes to innovations and creative methods of teaching; and whether the teachers are sufficiently prepared to utilize these creative strategies in every day classroom activities.

Analysis of the research into the problem.

Teaching is undoubtedly a subtle art and one needs to possess numerous skills and competences to become a real professional in this craft. These competencies and skills can be obtained through life-long learning and practice. To understand the nature of the creative teaching and learning process and assess teacher's preparedness for such activities in teaching young learners literacy we must previously decide on what we mean by creativity and literacy, creative teaching and learning, teacher's preparedness for creative teaching, and, primarily, reveal modern approaches to the content components of literacy as a concept. It is definitely hotly debated issue in the research domain, like the rest of the basic terminology of this research, due to multiple interpretations across different theories and fields of study.

The comprehensive analysis of the scientific literature on the matter of literacy teaching and learning in the foreign and Ukrainian national systems of education gives grounds to claim that it is an essential prerequisite for all kinds of learning. Literacy learning is no longer the authorization and prerogative of schooling years. In the 21st century with the rapid spread of new technologies and a constantly changing work environment it is recognized as a lifelong need and requirement and this is the principal reason why we ought to teach the basic literacy skills creatively. In the course of our study, we have become even more confident in the truth of the slogan of this study: «To be literate today means to be creative».

The overview of the reference literature manifested that the majority of scientists agree that junior school age is ideal for the in-depth development of creative and critical thinking since this very age is fairly sensitive to their development. Learning to act creatively for a junior student is similar to learning reading, writing, counting. To

confirm the accuracy of our conclusions, we present some of the most illustrative quotes from the leading Ukrainian and foreign scholars.

Vasyl Sukhomlynskyi said: «Learning should not be limited to a continuous accumulation of knowledge, to training of memory, to cramming, which dulls, deceives and gives nothing but harm to the health and mental development of a child ... Children ought to be provided with rich intellectual life, which is inseparable from creativity. They should become travelers, discoverers and creators in this life» (*Sukhomlynskyi, V.O. (1977).*) The concept of creative education was the research object of such scholars in Ukraine as O. Antonov, S. Sysoieva, A. Solohub, A. Khutorysky. Creating the right learning tasks and challenges at each stage of the lesson to develop students into powerfully creative thinkers is considered by N. Bibik, M. Vashulenko, T. Vorobiova, V. Davydova, O. Savchenko, O. Uman. All of them determined the learning task as a didactic means for the development of creative abilities of junior pupils in the process of learning literacy (*Vorobiova T.V. (2012).*)

The Curriculum Briefing (2012) in its editorial assumes that «creativity is not a bolt-on – it is an attitude towards learning that needs to be developed in all lessons. Doing so will help students build the learning skills they will need to thrive in life – from improving their social and emotional skills, to building their resilience and resourcefulness, from increasing their capacity to show initiative, to growing their ability to think divergently and overcome problems» (*Curriculum Briefing*).

T. Vorobiova suggests that the structure of the young learners creative abilities, which are to be formed and developed through teaching and learning literacy, encompasses information literacy, creative imagination, creative and critical thinking. The basis of each of the identified components of the creative abilities, in her opinion, is information literacy. The author interprets it as a set of cognitive-informational skills of creative and critical thinking. Having received the information, the children try to see, find and establish all possible connections between the new information and what is already well-known and calls it a productive processing of information, which is creative by its nature since it requires such skills as analyzing, synthesizing, classifying, comparing, establishing causal relationships, adding new details to achieve the goal or to find the best possible solution to the problem and representing it (*Vorobiova T. (2014).*)

Thus an overview of the frameworks, theories and assumptions regarding the issues of creativity and literacy teaching underpins our hypothesis that creative approach to teaching and learning (T&L) literacy in primary school contributes greatly to the development of the creative abilities of the young learners and create a solid base for life long learning.

Maintaining and raising standards in teaching creativity through literacy

The problem of teacher's preparedness for professional activity has become the subject of special studies not so long ago. Pleiads of scholars describe the preparedness of the future teacher to professional activity as a personal entity, which sustains internal motives, assure pedagogical self-consciousness, pedagogical skills and abilities, the ability to integrate knowledge professionally and significant personal qualities. According to A.Y. Kapska, the notion of "preparedness" should be considers as a positive attitude, interest, stability of the motives in pedagogical activity; knowledge and creative ideas about the peculiarities of the teaching and learning activity, compliance with the requirements for the teacher's personality; possession of skills of analysis, synthesis, comparisons, generalizations; self-assessment (*Vorobiova T. (2014).*)

Forming the professional preparedness of the future teacher is a specific process in view that professional knowledge must be formed simultaneously at all levels: methodological, theoretical, methodical and technological. In terms of creative teaching it implies that pre-service teachers are to be prepared sufficiently to manifest advanced professional thinking, the ability to select, analyze and synthesize acquired knowledge, transform them into a technological model. It can be argued that the readiness of the teacher to develop the creative activity of junior schoolchildren is determined by the level of the key skills of the creative person the teacher possesses himself, which provide a much appreciated creative approach to solving professional tasks and ability critically evaluate teaching-learning actions.

Formation of preparedness for pedagogical activity covers several stages: vocational guidance, professional selection, desirable pre-university pedagogical training, studies at higher pedagogical institutions and in-service professional adaptation, mentoring for novices. «To secure deep learning in all classrooms you need teaching staff who are creative in their approach to teaching and learning (T&L), and students who are skilled and confident to take risks and be innovative when tackling the varied creative learning tasks presented to them. To ensure all the staff to teach for creativity, you need a challenging and inspirational curriculum that provides every opportunity for injecting the right level of creativity in lessons to excite and engage all learners».¹

We argue that attracting highly- motivated entrants to the teaching profession, and providing high quality pre-service education as well as ongoing professional development are important requirements for maintaining, facilitating and raising standards in teaching creativity in education.

The Education for All Global Monitoring Report, an independent annual publication, facilitated and supported by UNESCO, states in its latest report *Teaching and Learning: Achieving quality for all* that «the key to ending the learning crisis is to recruit the best teacher candidates, including getting enough teachers into school; training teachers to meet the needs of all children; including the disadvantaged; providing teachers trainees with mentors; and providing ongoing teacher training and professional development».²

Teachers' Views on the Creative Teaching of Literacy in Elementary Grades

A comparative analysis of the theoretical concepts and the results of the case study of the actual state of the investigated phenomenon in the realities of Ukraine, as well as the experiences of some foreign countries (Finland, Croatia, Great Britain, and some others) allow to develop our own vision of the correlation of the concepts: literacy – creativity – creative teaching – teacher's preparedness.

Our research suggests that teachers need to be educated with more creative literacy techniques, especially to raise awareness of what creativity means, and which technologies and learning methods can be applied precisely to teaching key components of junior pupils' literacy (reading, writing, numeracy, information literacy and others). The creative methods, like Mind Mapping, «Patchwork quilt» – technique and a great plenty of other creative techniques aimed at underpinning the development of literacy

¹ Curriculum Briefing (Vol 10 No 2 2012 Editor: Angela Dewsbury. published by Optimus Education Website: www.optimus-education.com

² Meeting Our Commitments Accountability in education: 2017/8 GLOBAL EDUCATION MONITORING REPORT UNESCO, 2017 Second edition Published in 2017 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

skills, fit to facilitation of divergent thinking development and motivate schoolchildren to solve the problem on their own from the first steps on this way.

We have conducted a brief study of the actual situation in teacher training sphere regarding their preparedness to teach literacy creatively. The data were collected through surveys, interviews with pre-and in-service teachers (both beginners and experienced ones), and the observations of the live lessons (visual representations). The surveys included questions concerning the essence of pedagogical creativity, personal qualities of a creative teacher, recognition of the creative methods potential for the development of creative abilities of junior students in the process of learning literacy, their satisfaction with pre-service training and work at school. The respondents understand the essence of pedagogical creativity, first of all, as their own professional growth and improvement, as well as the ability to transform their skills into the modernization of the content, forms, methods and means to develop the students' creative abilities, their talents. Among the personal qualities that a creative teacher must possess, the interviewed teachers highlighted such as originality, initiative, high ability to work, and satisfaction from the process of work. Among the conditions necessary for the development of teacher's creativity respondents noted the following: the moral and psychological climate in the pedagogical team, the material base of the school, various types of stimulation of creative activity both of a teacher and the pupils. Practice experiences were recognized as key and valued experiences in the preparatory education of pre-service teachers. There is general agreement about the importance of pedagogical knowledge alongside with the content knowledge. Those, who participated in the surveys, felt insufficient level of preparedness for teaching creativity through literacy.

The analysis of the data regarding the application of creative methods of teaching literacy in every day classroom activities revealed that 77% of the teachers are familiar with certain methods of developing creative abilities of junior pupils in the process of teaching them reading, writing, spelling, numeracy, only 71% acknowledge the extremely important role of creative abilities in the education of junior pupils, in the formation of their personality, but only 46% of them use the creative methods systematically, 54% include creative tasks into the classroom activities regularly. Sixty-eight percent of the teachers-respondents reported that they use special literature on the formation of creative abilities of students while preparing plans of the lessons, but do this sporadically. Most teachers reported that they rarely develop their own forms and content of the lesson, but use teaching aids, teacher's guides and methodological recommendations. We believe that the main reason for this is a large number of teaching aids for teachers published by practically all publishing houses. These manuals and textbooks definitely facilitate the preparation of teachers for teaching their discipline, but obviously impede their individual creative approach to learning process.

Having analyzed the obtained data, we had to admit that the educational system in Ukraine needs changes in approaches to its content and form, since the existing system cannot cope with the challenges, which modern societies face. First of all, it concerns the period of pre-service preparation for professional activities in real classroom. Future teachers should be more motivated, more flexible, more open to innovations, in order to be up-to-date, to be role-models for their students. It is extremely important to convince young teachers how beneficial the utilization of the creative methods may turn out to be in teaching literacy and that it works only when they are the creators of their lessons, lesson plans, and the entire educational process.

Lilia Grynevych, Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine, laid emphasis on the fact that modern reform of education in Ukraine (New Ukrainian School) qualitatively differs from the previous attempts to reform national educational policy, since the state establishes real preconditions for changes. It is about a large-scale teacher training, which envisages All-Ukrainian training of all the teachers who are supposed to start teaching the pupils of the first grades since September 1, 2018.

Reforming education involves taking into account foreign experience and, on the basis of it, develop fundamental principles for the implementation of modernization measures into the national system of education. The study of the European countries experience in the scope of professional training of teachers made it possible to identify positive features, the key ideas of which can be utilized creatively in the process of updating the Ukrainian system of continuous pedagogical education: vocational guidance of applicants for teaching profession; variety of organizational forms and methods of training; development of individual trajectories of professional training; organization of the educational internship with the aim of professional adaptation of newly appointed teachers; training of mentors responsible for the process of adaptation of newly appointed teachers to the conditions of professional activity in an educational institution; scientific and methodological support of graduates of the pedagogical higher educational institution; vocational pre-service training of teachers at the school base and other important aspects. «No teacher is truly ready for the first day, but teacher preparation programs ought to assure that teachers have a solid foundation, so that they'll not only feel some success in the first year, but they'll stay in the classroom in the future».³

Conclusions

A detailed integral analysis of the issues of innovative approaches to teaching and learning literacy, government official documents and scholarly works and the successful experience of both national and foreign educational institutions gives grounds to assert that the effectiveness of teaching children literacy depends on the level the teacher has mastered modern creative techniques of teaching young learners. The study of the problem of a future teacher's preparedness for the formation of the creative skills of junior pupils in the process of learning literacy convincingly confirms our hypothesis that qualified, well trained teachers, effective teachers have much more importance than individual teaching materials, pedagogical approaches or «proven programs». The content of the courses and the experience of the pedagogical practices while studying at the university is a key to the success and effectiveness of the whole system of education, since they all contribute to raising the level of preparedness of the teacher to professional activity. In Ukraine, as in some other countries, teachers of universities that train pedagogical staff for schools do not have enough or have little previous experience as a teacher at school. These realities have a negative impact on the quality of pre-service training of future teachers, therefore, special training programs for the pedagogical staff, engaged in teacher-training courses can significantly improve the overall quality of in-service teachers' preparedness for teaching creatively. It became clear that investing into the effective preparation of primary school teachers, whether it concerns decision-making or planning their professional development, is the most appropriate strategy. If we strive for achieving the goal of «not leaving any child out of sight», we must focus on training of a significantly larger number of highly professional,

³ How Do You Make A Great Teacher? <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/how-do-you-make-great-teacher>

creative, experienced teachers. The data collected through surveys, interviews, and visual representations revealed the burning issues of reforming the national system of education and provided solid basis for working out recommendations how to improve it, taking into account the experiences of leading European countries. If government invested only some of the millions that they invest into improving the education system in Ukraine as a whole, into the programs related to training of competent teachers, the results would be impressive.

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