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Creative Methods in Improving Students' Independent Research Activities

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Abstract: Modern educational trends necessitate the development of students' abilities for independent scientific inquiry, which requires well-formed creative thinking. This article is devoted to the analysis of creative methods that stimulate students' independent research activities. It presents forms, principles, and examples of implementing creative approaches in the educational process. The effectiveness and significance of these methods for developing research competence are substantiated. Particular attention is given to issues of motivation and pedagogical conditions for introducing creative methodologies in higher education institutions.

Keywords: Independent student work, research activity, creative methods, higher education, motivation, pedagogical technologies.

Introduction: The modern system of higher education is aimed at developing the research competence of future specialists capable of analysis, synthesis and development of original solutions. One of the leading components in the training of scientifically oriented personnel is independent research activity of students. However, practice shows that traditional methods of its organization often do not stimulate students to actively participate in scientific research. In this regard, there is a need to use creative methods that contribute to the development of research initiative, critical and creative thinking. Such methods not only increase students' interest in scientific activity, but also form their sustainable motivation for independent knowledge and solving research problems. Creative approaches based on the principles of problem-based learning, project and

case methodology involve students in an active process of generating ideas, searching for non-standard solutions and substantiating their own hypotheses. The use of these methods requires the teacher to revise traditional forms of interaction with students. The teacher becomes not just a source of knowledge, but an organizer of the research environment, where the main role is played by cooperation, dialogue and development of the individual potential of each student. In addition, an important aspect of the implementation of creative methods is the creation of favorable pedagogical conditions: an atmosphere of trust, support, encouragement of initiative and freedom of scientific research. Only in such conditions is it possible to effectively develop research competence, focused not only on the reproduction of knowledge, but also on its transformation, application and expansion.

Theoretical foundations of creative methods in teaching. Creative teaching methods are based on the ideas of constructivism and the activity-based approach, according to which knowledge is formed in the process of active interaction of the subject with the environment. Creative teaching methods are based on the ideas of constructivism and the activity-based approach, according to which knowledge is formed in the process of active interaction of the subject with the environment. In this context, learning is not seen as the transfer of ready-made knowledge, but as the organization of conditions for independent discovery, reflection and comprehension of information. The student is not a passive consumer, but an active participant in the educational process, capable of setting goals, choosing means and evaluating the results of their activities. The use of creative methods - such as brainstorming, role-playing games, project and research work, storytelling, the method of visualizing ideas and others - contributes to the formation of flexible, multidimensional thinking necessary for solving complex and non-standard problems. These methods are especially effective in organizing educational situations that require analysis, synthesis, argumentation and the development of original solutions. Creative teaching technologies not only activate students' cognitive activity, but also serve as a powerful tool for developing research competence that meets the requirements of the modern educational paradigm.

Creativity in this context is considered as the ability to generate original ideas, find non-standard solutions and apply them in research practice.

Basic principles of a creative approach:

- problematic and open-ended task;
- focus on the process, not just the result;
- use of interdisciplinary connections;
- reflection and self-assessment of activities.

Creative methods are understood as such ways of organizing educational and scientific activities that activate cognitive processes, stimulate originality of thinking and form an individual research style [1]. They are based on the constructivist paradigm of education, within the framework of which knowledge is formed in the process of independent cognitive activity of the student [2]. The use of creative approaches in organizing students' research activities allows:

- to form a stable educational and scientific motivation;
- to develop the skills of independent problem setting;
- to master methods of finding non-standard solutions;
- to improve communication skills in the scientific environment.

Methods and forms of creative research activities. In practice, creative methods include various forms, among which we can highlight:

- Brainstorming method – stimulates collective development of hypotheses and ideas for scientific research.
- Case method (analysis of specific situations) – allows students to apply theoretical knowledge to real problems.
- Project activities – provide an opportunity to plan and implement their own research projects.
- Visualization method – helps to structure the material under study.
- Game methods (role-playing and business games) – develop research thinking through modeling situations.
- Synectics method – stimulates associative thinking when putting forward new ideas.[3];
- Research projects in small groups – develop team thinking and responsibility for the result;
- Inverse analysis method – develops skills of critical revision of known scientific provisions.

These methods can be implemented both within the framework of students’ classroom and extracurricular work.

The influence of creative methods on motivation and efficiency. Effective use of creative methods requires appropriate pedagogical conditions:

- the presence of a learning environment favorable for the manifestation of initiative;
- training teachers to use innovative methods;
- flexible organization of study time;

• use of digital technologies and collaboration platforms.

A student-centered approach, in which the teacher acts not only as a source of knowledge but also as a scientific partner, has a positive impact on student engagement in scientific activities [4].

The results of empirical research and teaching experience indicate that the use of creative methods:

• increases students' motivation for independent work;

• promotes better assimilation of the material;

• develops sustainable research skills;

• develops critical and systemic thinking;

• improves communication and presentation skills.

It is especially important to introduce creative methods at the early stages of training, when basic attitudes towards scientific activity are formed.

Creative methods are an important means of intensifying independent research activities of students. Their use contributes to the formation of motivation, research initiative and creative thinking. However, for a sustainable effect, methodological support, teacher training and continuous improvement of the educational environment are necessary.

Effective implementation of creative approaches requires a systematic approach, including the development of adapted teaching materials, the integration of innovative technologies into the educational process, as well as rethinking the role of the teacher as a mentor and facilitator. Particular attention should be paid to improving the qualifications of teachers in the field of modern active learning methods, developing their creative competence and readiness for experimental pedagogical practice. No less important is the formation of an educational environment that supports students' research activity: the presence of laboratories, creative spaces, digital platforms for collaboration and access to information resources. Only with the comprehensive implementation of all these conditions will creative teaching methods be able to fully realize their potential in the context of the formation of research competence of future specialists.

Thus, in the context of the transformation of modern higher education, creative teaching methods are becoming an important tool for the formation of students' research competence. They help to activate cognitive activity, stimulate motivation, develop critical and creative thinking, and also develop skills for independent scientific research. However, successful implementation of creative approaches requires comprehensive pedagogical support: methodological development, professional training of teachers and creation of an innovative educational environment. Only with a holistic strategy for implementing creative methods can we achieve sustainable results in training scientifically oriented, independent and proactive specialists who are able to effectively act in the conditions of a rapidly changing information and professional reality.

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