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THE BASICS OF CREATIVITY: ESSENCE, TRAITS, AND KEY ELEMENTS (ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA)

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ОСНОВЫ КРЕАТИВНОСТИ: СУЩНОСТЬ, ЧЕРТЫ И КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ ЭЛЕМЕНТЫ (НА ПРИМЕРЕ КИТАЙСКОЙ НАРОДНОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ)

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Аннотация. Креативность — это сложное многослойное понятие, включающее взаимодействие различных факторов, таких как внутренние черты личности, когнитивные процессы, эмоциональные состояния и внешняя среда. В китайском контексте креативность играет важную роль в формировании инновационного мышления и культурной самобытности. Благодаря использованию психологических механизмов креативности художественное образование в Китае достигло значительного развития, став инструментом для раскрытия и формирования творческого потенциала студентов. Таким образом, система художественного образования в Китае сегодня является не только средством профессиональной подготовки, но и инструментом формирования нового поколения творцов, способных мыслить оригинально и предлагать инновационные решения для современного мира.

Abstract. Creativity is a complex, multilayered concept that includes the interaction of various factors such as inner personality traits, cognitive processes, emotional states, and the external environment. In the Chinese context, creativity plays an important role in shaping innovative thinking and cultural identity. Thanks to the use of psychological mechanisms of creativity, art education in China has reached significant development, becoming a tool for unlocking and cultivating students' creative potential. Thus, the system of art education in China today serves not only as a means of professional training but also as a tool for shaping a new generation of creators capable of original thinking and offering innovative solutions for the modern world.

Ключевые слова: творчество, инновации, саморазвитие, образовательные методики.

Keywords: creativity, innovation, self-development, educational methods.

Revealing the essence of creativity is crucial for advancing research into its multifaceted and in-depth development. Regarding the definition and connotation of creativity, researchers have significant differences. Some believe that creativity is the exclusive domain of experts such as scientists, artists, sociologists, etc., and ordinary people do not possess the ability to create. Only when someone achieves something of social value and different from predecessors can they be said

to have creativity. Therefore, creativity is a psychological trait possessed by a few, and ordinary people cannot create. Another view, contrasting this, holds that the standard of uniqueness in creation lies within the creator themselves and does not need to rise to the societal level. Any novel idea, action, or product that an individual produces, unprecedented for them, is a sign of creativity. Creation can be divided into different levels, from micro-creation to creation in daily life to creation in professional fields, ultimately reaching outstanding creation. Personal creation is a kind of "proto-creation", while creation that reaches societal heights is "true creation." Thus, the progress of society always begins with "proto-creation" before developing into "true creation," thereby advancing the social sciences and culture. Regarding the essence of creativity, there have been many different views throughout history. In modern psychology, there are four representative viewpoints.

Psychodynamic School: Psychologists from this school believe that the creative process occurs in a state where self-control is relaxed, allowing free combinations and spontaneous expressions of ideas in the preconscious (the mental activity between consciousness and the unconscious) [4]. During this process, individuals revert to fantasy and combine it with problems, leading to the emergence of new ideas through free expression. For example, Freud emphasized the role of the unconscious in creativity, while Jung viewed creative art as a transformation of the collective unconscious outside of conscious control.

Humanistic Psychology: Psychologists from this school consider creativity to be a personality trait associated with self-actualization. For instance, Maslow believed that creativity stemming from self-actualization originates from personality and manifests in daily life, being a potential inherent in humans and developed under certain environmental conditions postnatally.

Cognitive Psychology: Psychologists from this school view creativity as the brain's organization of perfect experiences and flexible cognitive structures in a given context. For example, Gestalt psychologists divided the creative process into four stages: preparation (gathering information), incubation (letting ideas freely associate in the mind), illumination (suddenly solving problems with insights), and verification (testing the correctness and effectiveness of solutions). Guilford emphasized that creativity is a mental ability originating from divergent thinking characterized by fluency, flexibility, and originality. Sternberg proposed a three-dimensional model theory of creativity, positing that creativity consists of dimensions of intelligence, ways of intelligence, and personality.

Psychologists Studying Brain Hemispheres: These psychologists emphasize that the right hemisphere is the material basis of creativity, and the creative process depends on the cooperation of both hemispheres through the corpus callosum. Some experts believe that traditional educational activities overly emphasize convergent thinking, favoring the left hemisphere while neglecting the right. They suggest delaying judgment (not rushing to judge the rightness or wrongness of student work), fostering harmonious interpersonal relationships, stimulating latency periods (inducing reflection), and using biofeedback, meditation, relaxation techniques, etc., to help students enhance right-brain functions [2].

In summary, among the various theories regarding the essence of creativity, there are some common points:

1. Innovative settings should be created in teaching to eliminate obstacles to creative thinking.
2. Students should be made aware of the value of their own ideas.
3. A delayed judgment approach should be adopted.
4. Students' thinking flexibility should be extensively trained.
5. Creative behavior should be continuously stimulated.

During adolescence, due to the continuous enhancement of conceptual understanding and increased participation in social practices, teenagers' cognitive abilities develop significantly. This is the golden period for intellectual development. Adolescents' logical thinking abilities gradually become dominant, enabling them to reflect on the intrinsic relationships and connections of things through analysis, synthesis, abstraction, generalization, reasoning, and judgment. Independence, criticism, and creativity in thinking have notably improved. Based on the intellectual development characteristics of adolescents during this period, the Chinese government places great importance on the growth of young people and actively promotes quality education. To further strengthen art education in primary and secondary schools, on September 5, 2008, the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China issued "Opinions on Further Strengthening Art Education in Primary and Secondary Schools", stating that "Aesthetic education is an organic part of the national education policy. Art education is the basic path for schools to implement aesthetic education and is an indispensable part of quality education".

The document not only emphasizes the importance of recognizing the significance of art education in schools but also specifies measures to improve the quality of art education through curriculum plans. In the compulsory education stage, art courses account for 9-11% of total class hours [3]. Primary and secondary schools are required to follow the national curriculum standards and use textbooks reviewed and approved by the state, while strengthening educational quality inspections. In November 2020, the General Offices of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council jointly issued "Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving Aesthetic Education in Schools in the New Era", proposing the inclusion of art subjects in the pilot reform of the middle school entrance examination and in the scoring directory for high school admission examinations. Aesthetic education aims to cultivate students' abilities to recognize, discover, and create beauty.

To alleviate the burden on primary and secondary school students, the Ministry of Education specifically released "Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Homework and Extracurricular Training for Students in Compulsory Education Stage." Article 24 stipulates a significant reduction in subject-based extracurricular training. On October 26, 2021, at a press conference held by the Ministry of Education, Wang Dengfeng, director of the Department of Physical Education, Health, and Arts, stated that in addition to implementing the "double reduction" policies to reduce homework and extracurricular training burdens, there would also be a "double increase", increasing opportunities for students to participate in sports, arts, outdoor activities, and labor; increasing the time and opportunities for extracurricular sports, music, and art training; encouraging the establishment of music, sports, and art institutions; and encouraging students to participate in sports and aesthetic education training. Meanwhile, the state also attaches importance to art education by incorporating it into college entrance examination bonus policies and improving the comprehensive evaluation system for students' quality. Additionally, the Ministry of Education has announced the implementation of an aesthetic education immersion action plan to help students master 1-2 specialized artistic skills. Through continuous efforts, a comprehensive, diversified, high-quality modern school aesthetic education system with Chinese characteristics is being formed.

How can we promote innovative developments in art education in primary and secondary schools? Across the country, there are ongoing explorations and many successful experiences have been summarized. For example, the Chongqing Educational Association hosted a symposium on the collaborative innovative development of art education in primary and secondary schools. Zou Hong, principal of Yudai Mountain Primary School in Jiangbei District, shared the school's ten-year exploration and practice in art education with the theme "Exploring the Promotion of Children's Mental Health Through Art Education".

The school effectively integrates art education with children's mental health by creating a polka dot space in the Xu Beihong Children's Art Museum, organizing new students to make their own decorations, DIY clothes for Mental Health Festival, "You're Beautiful When Locked Up" psychological painting, and establishing a student psychological game club. The school arranges at least one art-specific training session lasting no less than 90 minutes each week, guides students to participate in "three ones" family self-help activities on weekends, and holds an annual cultural and arts week [1].

Huaxin Primary School in Futian District, Shenzhen, has collaborated on multiple fronts for rural aesthetic education, children's poetry education, and the development of integrated curricula, conducting thematic teaching activities such as "Art and Nature," "Art and Culture," and "Art and Technology," combining local characteristics and exploring the relationship between art and the natural environment and traditional culture around us. Emphasis is placed on guiding students to understand that integrating art with other disciplines can creatively solve problems. Based on this, the Huaxin Primary School Deng Liyun Children's Poetry Studio and the Six Acres of Land Cultural Fund of the Shenzhen Care Action Public Welfare Foundation jointly launched the "Youth Creativity Enhancement Action," organizing "Future Children's Poetry Classes."

This course aims to foster the holistic development of students through appreciating, creating, singing, dancing, and illustrating children's poetry; protecting the innocence of children; cultivating their curiosity, imagination, creativity, and expressive power; enhancing their appreciation of beauty; and awakening their inner vitality, promoting the overall development of students in moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education [4].

The above cases represent just the tip of the iceberg of the national aesthetic education work. Innovations and explorations in aesthetic education paths are diverse, unique, and effective. The goal is to seize the golden period of adolescent growth and development, using art education to develop brain functions, promote healthy brain development, enhance aesthetic literacy, and subtly influence their emotions, tastes, temperaments, and aspirations, inspiring their spirits, immersing their souls, and improving their innovative capabilities [5].

The Communication University of China actively promotes the school's aesthetic education immersion action, incorporating it into the school's agenda. They established a leadership group, created a guarantee mechanism, and continuously deepened comprehensive reform in aesthetic education. They formulated the "Implementation Plan for Aesthetic Education (Trial)," giving full play to the advantages of art-related disciplines, promoting the dual-track operation and organic integration of general art education and specialized art education, and exploring a fully integrated aesthetic education system from undergraduate to graduate levels. This ensures every student can enjoy high-quality art education resources and strives to achieve the cultivation of virtue through art and the nourishment of character through virtue. Particularly, they improved the guarantee system and actively innovated teaching models.

They followed the laws of art talent cultivation, continuously strengthened the teaching and management of public art education, characterized by art experience courses, and built an integrated curriculum system of "aesthetic literacy + creative ability," striving to cultivate students' artistic literacy and innovation ability. Based on general education courses in art popularization, they separately listed "art" characteristic courses, covering fine arts, calligraphy, music, film and television, photography, sculpture, etc., allowing students to develop their aesthetic tastes and improve their aesthetic abilities through art appreciation.

Chinese creativity testing methods have not only learned from advanced testing methods abroad but also innovated many testing methods. Currently, there are three types of intelligence measurement methods: testing methods, including personality testing, case studies, and behavioral

testing methods. Personality testing determines the psychological characteristics and creativity of the subject through their responses to questions using a "Creativity Personality Scale" to assess the level of creativity; case studies judge through the subject's childhood life, notable experiences, and interests and habits; behavioral testing determines the fluency, versatility, craftiness, and originality of thinking through problem-solving operations and language tests [5].

Product analysis method, primarily evaluating the number and citation rate of an individual's creative works, such as artistic creations, academic papers, inventions, etc., to assess the individual's creativity and influence. This method is more suitable for evaluating existing creative achievements but cannot predict creativity early on. Subjective evaluation method, where a group of experts and scholars evaluate the creative personality and works of the subject. Since creativity is a fuzzy concept, evaluators may produce different results due to differences in knowledge and understanding [4].

There are many creativity testing methods, especially a simple computer-based test invented by scientists called the "Divergent Associative Task." This new method requires participants to list ten nouns with the greatest semantic distance. For example, "cat" and "book." Then, a computer algorithm measures the semantic distance between the nouns generated by the individual—the relationship between these words...

In summary, creativity measurement should integrate multiple methods since a single tool cannot fully reflect an individual's level of creativity. During evaluation, factors such as age, cultural background, and professional field should be considered to ensure accuracy and fairness. Additionally, creativity is a dynamic developmental process, so long-term tracking and multi-period measurement are effective ways to understand changes in an individual's creativity trend.

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