

# Educational project as a way of improving students' creative activity

## Proyecto educativo como forma de mejorar la actividad creativa de los estudiantes

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#### ABSTRACT:

The modern education aims to make it possible for all students to demonstrate their creative potential. It conforms to contemporary humanistic tendencies in the graduate school development considering personal needs, abilities and experience of each student. *Methodology.* The creative activity within the educational project is regarded as a combination of conscious psychological phenomena (synthesis, analysis, comparison and associated processes: analogy, opposition, etc.) and unconscious ones.

*Results.* The examined activity involves the following stages: data search, data study and elaboration of something new. The author interprets the educational project as a special didactic mode, as students' cognitive and creative cooperation. It presupposes a common aim, which is equally important for all participants, and coordinated activity methods focused on solving an urgent problem by fulfilling a set of joint tasks. The project includes three constituents: motive, innovative technologies and creative potential. *Discussion.* The algorithm enabling to use the didactic concept in order to improve students' creative activity within the educational project contains the following stages: the formation and perfection of educational space; the model for achieving the goals linked with students' creative activity; relevant pedagogical conditions. *Conclusion.* The optimal vector for intensifying students' creative

#### RESUMEN:

La educación moderna tiene como objetivo hacer posible que todos los estudiantes demuestren su potencial creativo. Se ajusta a las tendencias humanistas contemporáneas en el desarrollo de la escuela de posgrado teniendo en cuenta las necesidades personales, las habilidades y la experiencia de cada alumno. *Metodología.* La actividad creativa dentro del proyecto educativo se considera como una combinación de fenómenos psicológicos conscientes (síntesis, análisis, comparación y procesos asociados: analogía, oposición, etc.) e inconscientes. *Resultados.* La actividad examinada comprende las siguientes etapas: búsqueda de datos, estudio de datos y elaboración de algo nuevo. El autor interpreta el proyecto educativo como un modo didáctico especial, como la cooperación cognitiva y creativa de los estudiantes. Presupone un objetivo común, que es igualmente importante para todos los participantes, y métodos de actividad coordinados centrados en la solución de un problema urgente mediante el cumplimiento de un conjunto de tareas conjuntas. El proyecto incluye tres componentes: motivo, tecnologías innovadoras y potencial creativo. *Discusión.* El algoritmo que permite utilizar el concepto didáctico para mejorar la actividad creativa de los estudiantes dentro del proyecto educativo contiene las siguientes etapas: la formación y la

activity is the establishment of a system of pedagogical and psychological means and methods. It will enable students to form a clear personal attitude to problem situations and solve them in a creative way.

**Keywords:** educational project, pedagogical conditions, creative activity, creative potential, joint tasks.

perfección del espacio educativo; el modelo para alcanzar los objetivos relacionados con la actividad creativa de los estudiantes; condiciones pedagógicas relevantes. *Conclusión.* El vector óptimo para intensificar la actividad creativa de los estudiantes es el establecimiento de un sistema de métodos y métodos pedagógicos y psicológicos. Permitirá a los estudiantes formar una actitud personal clara ante situaciones problemáticas y resolverlas de una manera creativa.

**Palabras clave:** proyecto educativo, condiciones pedagógicas, actividad creativa, potencial creativo, tareas conjuntas.

## 1. Introduction

Today, pedagogy recognizes the importance of building flexible learning technologies that reflect the modern vision of the educational process (including the method of projects). The prospects for the technologies application in the educational process are theoretically justified, and attempts to identify their organizational and pedagogical foundations are made.

Educational project activity is understood as a creative process aimed at revealing and satisfying students' cognitive needs through the creation of an ideal or material product with subjective or objective novelty [Sergeeva & Nikitina, 2016; Milovanov et al., 2017; Sergeeva, Ippolitova et al., 2018; Sergeeva, Sokolova et al., 2018]. The gradual sequence of the project activity makes it possible to build the learning process in logic that has a personal meaning for the student [Mikheeva, 2016; Bourina & Dunaeva, 2017; Tatarinceva, Sergeeva et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2018]. It will raise the level of their creative activity.

The project activity is the creative mental activity based on information processing. It is characterized both by logical and by intuitive thinking mindset. This activity is conditioned by personal qualities and creative abilities. It has certain values. [Mukhin, Mishatkina & Sokolova, 2017; Sergeeva, Flyagina et al., 2017; Samokhin et al., 2018] In the process of studying the humanitarian disciplines the project activity introduces students to creativity, to the active formation of something new. It forms non-standard thought, promotes creative enrichment and development, increases personality's creative potential, develops the general and special abilities [Ju et al., 2017; Mukhin et al., 2017; Sergeeva, Komarovskaya et al., 2018]. Along with that, in spite of the growing interest to the humanitarian sphere, the students are not supported with methods of active creative interaction in the current educational practice.

## 2. Methodology

The problem of the development of creative activity is examined at the inter-disciplinary level. The philosophical aspect is connected with the definition of the creative personality as being active in the surrounding world. In psychology reasoning/thinking is the initial dynamic characteristic of the people's communication. The pedagogical aspect emphasizes the features of the creative personality: a vivid humanistic character, focus on development and self-development, organized cooperation and creative interaction of students and teachers [Dmitrichenkova & Dolzhich, 2017; Micheeva, Popova & Ignashina, 2017; Sergeeva, Sineinikov & Sukhodimtseva, 2017].

Project activity as a specific form of creativity is a universal means of personal development. It is especially productive when working with students, in accordance with their aspirations for the future and the desire for active self-realization [Neverkovich et al., 2018; Sergeeva, Bedenko et al., 2018]. In addition, for the student project activities can be an effective means of personal professional development, the formation of professionally significant creative qualities, improvement of the reality and self-improvement [Sukhodimtseva et al., 2018; Tatrinceva, Sokolova, Mrachenko et al., 2018].

We state that the project activity correlation with such philosophical indicators of creativity as "combining" and "freedom" is significant.

Combining is evident in the construction of operational models (the stage of synthesis) in the project activity. The image of the project activity object is transformed here on the basis of a search of various combinations of the most significant parts.

The analysis of the project activity allows us to conclude that the subject of the project activity makes a free choice, guided by the goal, at all stages: selecting sources of information for studying the problem, analysing and selecting theories, modeling various combinations of the project activity object, defining one conceptual model from the set of options.

Educational project activity is based on creative thinking, accompanied by psychological processes (conscious - comparison, analysis, synthesis, unconscious - thinking) and has the following main characteristics [Sergeeva & Nikitina, 2016; Tatarinceva, Sokolova, Sergeyeva et. al., 2018]:

- subjectivity - it is the student who plans and carries out activities, regulating their implementation and results in accordance with students' needs, personal abilities;
  - objectivity - the student's activity is directed at the subject, on which its content, means, methods, products and result depend, i.e. scope of student's activity;
  - activity – the need of energy costs for the implementation of project activities and the need to achieve results;
  - purposefulness - a structured sequence of operations and actions allows to achieve intermediate results and a final creative result corresponding to the goal;
  - motivation - promotes the awakening of personal activity;
  - mindfulness - giving individual meaningful sense to specific actions on the basis of coordination of the need, motive, purpose of the project activity.
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### **3. Results**

The educational project is defined as a didactic means, the joint teaching, cognitive, and creative (or game) activity of students. It assumes a common goal, agreed methods, methods of activity aimed at achieving a common result for solving the problem that is significant for project participants [Sergeeva, Flyagina et al., 2017; Sergeyeva, Ippolitova et al., 2018].

The educational project activity includes the following stages:

- 1) information and retrieval, when information is searched (development of individual and group tasks, analysis of the student's personal experience, definition of resources, etc.) and studied carefully;
- 2) research, when the ways of solving the problem, the amount of independent work of students, ways to evaluate intermediate results and their correction are selected.
- 3) creative, when the presentations are prepared, actively discussed and protected, etc.

The project activity stages (goal-setting, analysis, synthesis, evaluation) correspond to the acts singled out by the psychologists. Thus, R.S. Mensfill and T.V. Busse point out the following activity acts: the problem choice → purposeful long-term effort → the set of restrictions ascertainment → changing and overcoming the set of restrictions → checking and detailed development [Milovanov et al., 2017]. V.A. Molyako gives some other names to these phases: the problem emergence → the problem formulation → preparation for the solution → the idea formation → the concept embodiment → verification and refinement [Sukhodimtseva et al., 2018].

The goal of the didactic model of the development of students' creative activity in the project activity process is to create such an educational space where the predictable level of students' creative activity can be achieved. We distinguish the following structural components in the model: motivation, innovative technologies, creativity.

The content of each structural component is revealed through modules: general-didactic, subject-methodological and psychological-didactic.

The general-didactic module solves the following tasks of developing students' creative activity:

a) the acquisition of cognitive, emotional-volitional, psychological properties (character, abilities, inclination) by the students;

b) the perfection of personal characteristics (mind and will mobilization, constructive independence, unexpected associativity, ability to solve creative non-standard tasks, etc.).

The subject-methodological module of the didactic model assumes the solution of the following tasks:

- the formation of stable cognitive interest of students in their future professional activity;
- the active use of innovative technologies;
- the formation of communication links and exchange of constructive experience with participants of other projects.

The psychological module and its blocks allow to solve the following tasks:

- the formation of students' humane orientation, ensuring the individual's free development and self-realization in educational project activities and in further professional self-assertion;
- the formation and development of the individual's creative qualities;
- the formation of a comfortable creative educational environment, which provides the opportunity for development and manifestation of students' creative activity.

The presented model, in our opinion, is quite complete and versatile in terms of describing the object of modeling. It is open to improvements.

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## 4. Discussion

The mechanism for implementing the didactic model of the development of students' creative activity in the logic of the educational project includes [Sergeeva & Nikitina, 2016; Tatarinceva, Sokolova, Mrachenko et al., 2018]: 1) the creation and development of an educational environment; 2) the algorithm for realizing the tasks of development of students' creative activity; 3) the pedagogical conditions, which facilitate the creative students' activity; 4) the non-traditional methods of teaching (the Delphi method, the "black box" method, the method of diaries, the method of brainstorming, etc.); 5) technologies (museum-exhibition technology, "image and thought" technologies, creative workshops, etc.).

The criteria and indicators of the development of students' creative activity in the logic of the educational project were singled out in the research:

- 1) "sense of novelty", the cognitive interest of the individual (characterized by the originality of thinking, the ability to navigate in new conditions, the ability to solve learning tasks creatively, achieving novelty of results);
- 2) the state and dynamics of development of various creative thinking qualities (creativity, ability to reflect, independence, criticality);
- 3) the degree of awareness of operations and thought activity techniques on the basis of concepts, laws of logic, evidence, refutation of the ways of achieving the truth;
- 4) modeling, systematization, structuring of the material in the process of work on the training project.

Based on the selected indicators, the levels of development of students' creative activity were established.

At the low (reproductive) level students demonstrate weak knowledge in different fields, indifference to the problem, lack of skills and abilities in the learning process. They are prone to reproductive activities, they practically do not use self-control techniques. Students of the middle (reproductive-cognitive) level are characterized by the manifestation of passive knowledge and skills strengthening, lack of self-fulfillment of non-standard character tasks, and weak skills in self-control. At the insufficiently high (productive) level students show a wide but unstable cognitive interest, sufficient intellectual activity; they are

characterized by a slower pace of solving creative tasks and a limited number of proposed solutions to the problem. Students who have reached the sufficiently high (creative) level of activity development are characterized by independence, divergence of thinking, high intellectual level, mastery of self-control skills, initiative, and speed of solving the problem or task.

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## 5. Conclusions

The proposed didactic model of development of students' creative activity in the logic of the educational project ensures the growth of knowledge in the humanitarian disciplines, forms communicative and professionally significant qualities (independence, initiative, flexibility, mobility, etc.). It allows students to expand personal opportunities.

The students' activity in the logic of the educational project can be characterized as a continuous dynamic process of manifestation of the creative activity of the student's personality, which is determined by integrative links of the main stages of the project activity. It provides intrapersonal motivation on the basis of goal-setting, the development of the idea, its implementation, and obtaining concrete results in the form of a new creative product. The new product is the result of the project activity in the study of humanitarian disciplines.

The results of the experiment showed that the created organizational and pedagogical conditions effectively influence the development of the intellectual, communicative and creative abilities of the individual, ensure the growth of self-esteem, awareness of self-sufficiency. According to the results of testing and comparative analysis of the data, it can be concluded that the activity in the logic of the educational project positively influences the development of students' thinking flexibility in the study of humanitarian disciplines. It indicates a diversity of ideas and strategies, the ability to move from one aspect to another. At the Institute of Foreign Languages of Peoples' Friendship University of Russia an educational environment has been created and continues to develop. The opportunities of students and teachers are assessed, and the rules for their co-creation are established.

The carried out research does not exhaust all aspects of the issue, which, of course, require further development. It seems promising to study the nature of the inter-subject creative interaction of the participants in the educational process in the logic of the educational project.

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