DIDACTIC POSSIBILITIES OF THE PROBLEM-BASED SITUATION METHOD IN DEVELOPING CHILDREN'S CREATIVE THINKING THROUGH VISUAL ACTIVITIES IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT. This article highlights the pedagogical and didactic possibilities of the problem-based situation method in developing children's creative thinking potential during visual activities in preschool educational institutions. The study analyzes the essence of problem-based situations, their classification, and the methodological algorithm for their organization. Furthermore, the mechanisms for developing components of creative thinking–such as originality, flexibility, idea fluency, elaboration, and reflection–through a problem-based approach are substantiated. Practical examples of problem-based situations used in visual activities, as well as assessment criteria, are also presented. The research findings indicate that the problem-based situation method serves as an effective methodological tool for activating the preschool educational process and fostering independent thinking and creative approaches in children.

KEYWORDS: problem-based situation, creative thinking, visual activity, preschool education, creativity, originality, flexibility, idea fluency, elaboration, reflection, pedagogical technology, problem-based approach

In preschool educational institutions, the use of problem-based situations is considered one of the most effective methodological approaches for developing children's creative thinking potential. The pedagogical essence of this method lies in the fact that instead of providing ready-made answers or tasks based on fixed models, children are presented with a problem situation (a question, limitation, contradiction, or a "what can be done?" scenario).

In such situations, the child explores, thinks, generates alternatives, makes choices, and presents their own solution as a practical outcome. This process activates the core mechanisms of creative thinking–originality, flexibility, idea fluency, and reflective thinking.

A problem-based situation is a condition that stimulates a child's cognitive need, encourages thinking, and cannot be solved through routine methods. In preschool

education, such situations should not appear as complex theoretical problems but rather as engaging and understandable scenarios suitable for children [3].

Particularly in visual activities, problem-based situations promote creative exploration, as children constantly engage in decision-making processes while drawing, modeling shapes, or constructing compositions.

The method of creating problem-based situations has the following pedagogical characteristics: enhances "why?" and "how?" questioning; develops the need to find unconventional solutions; increases opportunities for creative experimentation; encourages independent thinking and initiative; transforms the learning process into an exploratory, process-oriented activity.

A problem-based approach develops children's creative thinking in visual activities in the following directions: Originality: the child proposes unique ideas beyond standard patterns; Flexibility: learns to solve a problem in multiple ways; Idea fluency: generates a greater number of possible solutions; Elaboration: refines and enriches ideas; Independence: does not rely on ready instructions but experiments independently; Reflection: becomes accustomed to explaining their actions (e.g., "I did it this way because…").

Thus, the problem-based situation method contributes not only to the development of drawing techniques but also to the enhancement of thinking processes.

In preschool educational practice, problem-based situations for visual activities can be classified as follows (see Table 1).

Table 1

Classification of Problem-Based Situations for Visual Activities

No.	Type of Problem-Based Situation	Description (brief)	Example (tasks)	Impact (developed components)
1	Resource limitation problem	The child is given a situation where usual materials are limited	"The paint has run out, how can we continue the drawing?" "There is no pencil, what can we use to draw?"	Creative problem-solving + flexibility are developed
2	Shape and image transformation problem	The child transforms one shape into different forms	"What can this circle become?" "What objects can be made from a triangle?"	Association + originality are enhanced

3	Plot-based problem (story creation)	The child continues a story through drawing	"Draw the continuation of the fairy tale." "Where did the character go?"	Imagination + compositional thinking are developed
4	Contradictory interpretation problem	One theme is depicted in two contrasting ways	"Show joy and sadness in one picture." "Combine a rainy and sunny day in a single drawing."	Flexibility + elaboration increase
5	"Do it differently" problem	The task requires an unconventional approach	"Draw a house, but it should not be an ordinary one." "Create an animal that does not exist in nature."	Originality + novelty are developed

The effective use of the problem-based situation method in the educational process plays an important role in developing students' (especially preschool children's) creative thinking, independent decision-making, and problem-solving skills [1]. In order to apply this method effectively, it must be organized according to a clearly defined methodological sequence. Research findings and pedagogical practice indicate that high efficiency is achieved when the organization of problem-based situations is carried out through the following stages.

The first stage is the creation of a motivational situation. At this stage, the teacher uses a narrative-based introduction to stimulate children's interest and intrinsic motivation. A problem situation is created through the use of pictures, toys, objects, fairy tales, or video materials. For example, a situation such as "The magic paints have disappeared!" evokes surprise, curiosity, and a desire to solve the problem in children. The main objective of this stage is to prepare children for active thinking and engage them in the problem situation.

The second stage is the formulation of the problem. At this stage, the teacher presents the problem in a simple, clear, and age-appropriate manner. The problem is clarified through guiding questions such as: "How can we draw the picture now?" or "What solution can we find?". This stage helps children understand, perceive, and comprehend the task.

The third stage is the generation of alternatives (idea fluency stage). At this stage, children are encouraged to think freely and propose various ideas. The teacher stimulates idea generation through questions such as: "What other ways are there?" or "Does anyone have another idea?". This process is organized in the form of a

brainstorming activity adapted to preschool children. This stage develops creativity, divergent thinking, and initiative.

The fourth stage is the selection and practical testing stage. At this stage, children are given the opportunity to choose the most appropriate solution from the proposed options and test it in practice. The teacher organizes activities such as using non-traditional techniques and combining different materials. Through this process, children learn to apply theoretical ideas in practical activities.

The fifth stage is the enrichment of results stage. At this stage, children are guided to further improve and refine their work. The teacher supports elaboration, enhancement of composition, and expansion of creative approaches. For example, questions such as "What additional detail can be added?" or "Does the picture need a background?" help enrich the work. This stage contributes to the development of aesthetic sense and creative thinking.

The sixth stage is the reflection and presentation stage. At this final stage, children present their work and explain the solutions they have chosen. Reflection is carried out through questions such as: "What did I do?", "Why did I choose this?", and "What else could I have done?". This stage develops children's ability to analyze, evaluate their own activities, and express their ideas verbally.

Organizing the problem-based situation method according to this methodological algorithm serves as an effective pedagogical tool for developing children's creative thinking, independent decision-making, and practical skills. This approach activates the educational process, engages children as active participants, and contributes to improving the quality of education.

Examples of problem-based situations in visual activities are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Examples of Problem-Based Situations in Visual Activities

No.	Problem-Based Situation (Task)	Problem Description	Possible Solutions	Expected Outcome
1	"How can we depict a rainy day in a drawing?"	It is difficult to draw rain; it often turns into simple lines	Thread painting, drop printing, monoprint, stamping	Visual thinking + technical creativity
2	"One shape – different images"	A circle is given, but with the condition "not only a ball"	Sun, face, wheel, ice cream, clock, apple	Association + originality

3	"The paper is small, but a large landscape must be drawn"	Limited space	Compositional solutions: highlighting the main object, simplifying the background	Thinking + planning
4	"Invent a new type of animal"	The animal does not exist; it must be imagined	Bird + fish, cat + butterfly, etc.	Creative combination
5	"Show movement in a drawing"	It is necessary to depict motion (e.g., a running child)	Dynamic lines, posture, background, traces	Elaboration + figurative thinking

When assessing works выполнed based on problem-based situations, the following indicators are important:

1. Number of alternatives (idea fluency)
2. Novelty of the solution (originality)
3. Adaptability to change (flexibility)
4. Enrichment of the work (elaboration)
5. Level of independence
6. Ability to explain (reflection)

The method of creating problem-based situations is an effective methodological approach for developing children's creative thinking potential through visual activities in preschool educational institutions. This method encourages children to move beyond ready-made patterns, search for unconventional solutions, test different alternatives, make independent choices, and explain the results of their activities through reflection. As a result, visual activities transform from a reproductive process into a creative and exploratory one, ensuring the consistent development of the core components of creative thinking in children.

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