Didactic Conditions For Supporting Creativity In Mother Tongue And Reading Literacy Lessons In Primary Education

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Abstract: The article analyzes the issue of supporting creativity in "Mother Tongue and Reading Literacy" lessons in primary education from the perspective of a competency-based approach. On the basis of synthesizing research findings, three key conditions for developing creativity are identified: (1) using learners' creative thinking potential effectively; (2) shifting teacher–student interaction from an evaluation-oriented approach to an approach grounded in cooperation and inquiry; and (3) strengthening teachers' self-confidence regarding creativity. It is substantiated from a scientific and methodological standpoint that integrating these conditions into mother tongue and reading lessons contributes to the formation of students' skills in alternative thinking, argumentation, communication, and reflective analysis.

Introduction: Supporting creativity in mother tongue and reading literacy lessons in primary grades has become extremely relevant today. This is because modern education is expected not only to teach children to read and write, but also to develop their ability to think, express their ideas freely, find solutions in different situations, and approach problems from multiple perspectives. Therefore, incorporating creativity into classroom practice is not a simple "additional activity"; rather, it is a didactic issue closely connected to how the teaching–learning process is organized.

The subjects "Mother Tongue and Reading Literacy" in primary education play an important role in students' linguistic and cognitive development. Through these subjects, competencies such as understanding texts, logical thinking, providing arguments, expressing one's viewpoint in a well-grounded manner, and engaging in collaborative communication are formed step by step[1]. For this reason, supporting creativity in mother tongue and reading lessons is directly linked to the competency-based goals of education and can be viewed as a crucial didactic process that moves learners from the level of "retelling ready-made content" to the level of "creating meaning, interpreting, and drawing conclusions".

It is true that creativity is sometimes understood only as drawing, staging, or writing poems. However, in mother tongue and reading lessons, creativity includes the ability to read a text and generate new ideas from it, find alternative solutions, make comparisons and analogies, interpret a character's actions in different ways, and draw one's own conclusions. In other words, creativity is less a specific "type of activity" in the lesson and more an internal system that transforms a learner's way of thinking and culture of working with texts.

At the same time, within a competency-based approach, learning outcomes such as creative thinking, finding solutions in problematic situations, and expressing ideas flexibly are increasingly recognized as essential[3]. This requires the teacher not to limit the lesson to control and assessment methods, but to create a methodological environment that encourages learners to explore, test their ideas, and propose different solutions. Hence, creativity is not an external

decoration of the lesson; it is an internal system of the educational process that gradually transforms and enriches students' thinking and helps shape them as individuals capable of creating meaning.

Research objective: to identify the didactic conditions for supporting creativity in mother tongue and reading lessons in primary education and to substantiate approaches for implementing them in practice.

Tasks:

1.   to provide a scientific rationale for the three generalized conditions for developing creativity;

2.   to reveal the practical manifestations of these conditions in mother tongue and reading lessons;

3.   to propose methodological solutions that support creativity in teachers' practice;

4.   to develop conclusions and recommendations.

During the research process, the methods of studying and analyzing scholarly literature (analysis–synthesis), generalization, comparison, pedagogical observation, and self-analysis were used[5].

METHOD

1. Making effective use of students' creative thinking potential

The research results show that the first condition for developing creativity is recognizing students' creative thinking potential and using it purposefully in the lesson process. Primary school learners have a strong imagination and naturally tend toward activities such as composing stories, making predictions, reconstructing situations, and thinking figuratively. In mother tongue and reading lessons, this natural potential becomes activated specifically through working with texts: learners do not limit themselves to memorizing events, but interpret them, attempt to explain cause-and-effect relationships, and strive to express their own viewpoints.

In the scholarly literature, creative thinking is interpreted as the harmony of divergent and convergent processes—that is, generating many ideas about a problem and then selecting and justifying the most appropriate one[7]. In this sense, creativity is not simply "speaking a lot"; it also includes processes such as organizing ideas, arguing, explaining, and expressing them clearly. In mother tongue and reading lessons, this can be systematically developed by increasing the share of open-ended tasks.

For example, the task "Find a title for the text" is often limited to a single answer. To make it more creative, it can be reformulated as: "Find three different titles for the text: a serious one, an interesting one, and a funny one." This approach helps students view the text content from different angles and expand their thinking. Likewise, enriching the question "What did the character do?" with questions such as "Why did they do it?", "Could they have acted differently?", and "What would you do in their place?" leads students into analysis and interpretation. Tasks such as changing the ending of a story, creating a dialogue, writing a letter to a character, retelling the text from another character's perspective, or rewriting the event by changing the setting naturally activate the child's creative thinking process.

However, one of the main obstacles to implementing this first condition in practice may be related to teachers' perceptions of creativity. In some cases, creativity is interpreted only within the limits of activities such as drawing, writing poems, or staging performances. Yet working with language and text itself is also creative activity: choosing words, restructuring sentences, enriching meaning, producing figurative expressions, and offering alternative interpretations—all of these require creative thinking. Therefore, the teacher needs to understand creativity not only as a "creative product," but also as a "creative thinking process," and organize lesson methodology on this basis.

"Compact Table 1. Ways to implement the first condition."

Approach	Sample task	Expected outcome
Open-ended tasks	"Find 3 different titles"	Alternative thinking, interpretation

Approach	Sample task	Expected outcome
Alternative ending	"Finish the story with a different ending"	Originality, imagination
Letter to the character	"Write advice to the character"	Empathy, expressing ideas
Retelling	"Tell it from another character's point of view"	Perspective shift

A key methodological point related to the first condition is that interpreting creativity too narrowly may lead to errors. Creativity is not limited to staging performances or drawing; working with language and texts itself is also a creative process (choosing words, enriching meaning, providing alternative interpretations). Therefore, the teacher should understand creativity not so much as a "creative product," but rather as a "creative thinking process".

2. Directing teacher–student interaction toward inquiry and collaboration

As the second condition, it is identified that teacher–student communication should be shifted from an assessment-oriented approach to an approach based on collaboration and inquiry. A primary school student often fears making mistakes, which can limit their willingness to express new ideas. If classroom interaction relies only on the "right–wrong" criterion, the student chooses a safe answer, and the likelihood that creativity will fade increases[14]. In a classroom environment that supports creativity, the teacher does not view mistakes as something to punish, but as opportunities for learning; the teacher encourages reasoning through questions such as "Why did you think that way?"

Therefore, using open-ended questions widely in the lesson process (why?, how?, could it be different?) and extending a student's response with questions like "How did you think about it?" and "Which part of the text served as evidence?" actively engages the learner in thinking[15]. Such an approach also develops a culture of argumentation: the child does not simply say "I think so," but tries to find justification in the text.

Pair and group work methods also strengthen a creative learning environment. For example, applying the "I Saw – I Thought – I Wonder" strategy and the "Think – Pair – Share" format leads the student first to think independently, then refine ideas through collaboration, and finally present them to the class[16]. If the questions discussed in groups are not "single-answer" but "multiple-solution" questions, students' thinking becomes more open and expansive[17]. At the same time, to organize collaboration effectively, it is advisable for the teacher to set clear rules (time, roles, the form of the outcome); otherwise, group work may be misinterpreted as disorder.

In this process, assessment also changes: not only the final result, but also process criteria are taken into account. For instance, assessment through a rubric based on indicators such as "novelty of the idea," "justification (evidence)," "expression," and "collaboration" encourages students to think freely[18]. An assessment criteria table, on the one hand, presents assessment in a fair form; on the other hand, it shows the learner "how to grow and improve."

"Compact Table 2. Ways to implement the second condition."

Approach	Sample task	Expected outcome
Open-ended questions	"Why did it happen this way?"	Analysis, cause-and-effect reasoning
Asking for evidence	"Find evidence in the text"	Justification, logic

Approach	Sample task	Expected outcome
Think–Pair–Share	"Think first, then share with a partner"	Collaboration, communication
Group discussion	"Develop 2–3 solutions"	Flexibility (adaptability)

In assessment, process criteria are also strengthened. A rubric based on indicators such as "novelty of the idea," "justification (evidence)," "expression," and "collaboration" encourages students to think freely[18].

A brief rubric example (4 criteria, 4 levels):

1. Novelty of the idea (ordinary → interesting → original → innovative)

2. Evidence/justification (none → partial → clear → well-developed)

3. Expression (difficult → partial → fluent → impactful)

4. Collaboration (passive → participant → active → leader)

3. Increasing teachers' self-confidence regarding creativity

The third condition—enhancing teachers' self-confidence regarding creativity—emerges as the most important psychological and pedagogical factor that ensures the sustainability of creative lessons. In practice, many teachers want to use creative tasks, but they are restrained by concerns such as "there isn't enough time," "the class will become noisy," "assessment is difficult," and "what should I do if everyone gives different answers?"[19]. This, in turn, prevents the systematic integration of creativity elements into lessons.

For this reason, strengthening the teacher's inner belief—"I can manage a creative lesson"—should be achieved through methodological support, peer exchange, training sessions, and reflection[20]. In this process, the "step-by-step creativity" approach is especially effective: the teacher does not try to radically change the lesson all at once, but gradually adds small creative elements to each lesson. For example, methods such as a three-minute idea brainstorm, having students compose one question about the text, writing advice to the character, creating an alternative ending, or expressing the text's main idea in a different way within one sentence are convenient for both the teacher and the students. As a result, the teacher sees that creative methods work, and their confidence increases.

In addition, a bank of creative tasks, a question catalogue, an assessment rubric/table, and model lesson plans help stabilize the teacher's creative approach[22]. The important point here is that the teacher does not have to "invent everything from scratch"; when systematic methodological resources are available, planning a creative lesson becomes easier, and creativity gradually turns into a regular component of the lesson.

A bank of creative tasks, a question catalogue, an assessment rubric/table, and sample materials also strengthen the teacher's creative approach.

"Compact Table 3. Ways to implement the third condition."

Approach	Practical form	Expected outcome
Step-by-step implementation	One creative element in each lesson	Sustainability, motivation
Reflection	"What worked, what was difficult?"	Growth point (area for improvement)
Methodological bank	Task catalogue	Saves time

Approach	Practical form	Expected outcome
Experience sharing	Open lesson, seminar	Professional confidence

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, supporting creativity in mother tongue and reading literacy lessons in primary education requires the systematic provision of three conditions: (1) making effective use of students' creative thinking potential; (2) directing teacher–student interaction toward inquiry and collaboration; and (3) increasing teachers' self-confidence regarding creativity. When these conditions are implemented consistently, students learn not merely to retell a text, but to draw conclusions from it, generate alternative ideas, justify their views with evidence, and express their thoughts fluently. Therefore, supporting creativity is a key methodological factor for improving the quality and effectiveness of mother tongue and reading lessons.

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