

DEVELOPING CREATIVE THINKING SKILLS IN DIVERGENT THINKERS OF PRESCHOOL AGE

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Abstract:

This article explores the concept of creative thinking, its significance, and how it can be nurtured in children. It discusses strategies for developing creative thinking skills, provides tips for fostering creativity, and introduces games and activities that enhance children's creative abilities.

Keywords: Creative thinking, convergent thinking, divergent thinking, inspirational thinking, lateral thinking, aesthetic thinking.

Introduction

Divergent thinking is a form of creative thinking that employs unconventional approaches to problem-solving. Instead of settling for an existing answer or accepting a lack of solutions, it encourages asking, "What happens if you do this?" and seeking alternative responses.

The goal of divergent thinking is to generate various ideas within a short time frame. It involves breaking a subject into different components to gain a broader understanding. Divergent thinking often occurs spontaneously and freely, resulting in ideas forming in a seemingly random manner. Unexpected connections frequently emerge.

Divergent thinking fosters creativity. There are four main types of divergent thinking:

Fluency – the ability to generate numerous ideas,

Flexibility – the ability to develop ideas across multiple categories,

Originality – the ability to produce unique or unconventional ideas, and

Elaboration – the ability to refine abstract ideas into practical solutions.

Divergent thinking helps identify creative children as it involves exploring various possibilities and determining the best solution through a creative process.

Creative thinking is the ability to develop new and diverse approaches to problems or concepts. It involves processing existing information and experiences, adopting different perspectives, and recognizing new patterns. Experts have identified five types of creative thinking, which serve as fundamental skills for child development. Convergent thinking focuses on analyzing facts and selecting the most common solution to a problem. In contrast, divergent thinking can be compared to brainstorming—it encourages generating as many ideas as possible. Similarly, inspirational thinking enables envisioning the best scenarios to create new approaches to problems. Lateral thinking takes a more structured approach by focusing on the flow of ideas in a step-by-step manner. Meanwhile, aesthetic thinking offers a completely different perspective—it encourages viewing a problem from a unique framework, appreciating its value and beauty, much like observing a painting.

The main part

Creative thinking helps children connect ideas and process them to develop new concepts. It enhances their imagination and concentration while fostering an ability to view the world from different perspectives. Key critical and creative thinking skills for children include:

- Imagination
- Brainstorming
- Flexibility
- Visualization
- Questioning

A natural question arises: Why is creative thinking important for children? Creative thinking skills benefit children in many ways. They enable them to see things from multiple perspectives, recognize new patterns, and explore alternative solutions beyond conventional approaches. For students, creative thinking is crucial in improving analytical skills, as both critical and creative thinking encourage them to view the world differently, ask questions, and investigate.

One simple yet effective way to help children think differently is by asking open-ended questions—questions that cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." The more open-ended the question, the more diverse answers children can generate. In the classroom, it is important to shift students' focus from simply finding the

"correct" answer to engaging in the learning process. If children worry too much about finding the "right" answer, they may rush to choose the first option that comes to mind. However, if they take more time to reflect, they may come up with more thoughtful and creative responses.

Additionally, teaching children to view failures not as negative experiences but as learning opportunities is essential. Mistakes provide valuable lessons that can guide them toward more successful solutions. If a child struggles with a project, praise their effort and encourage them to try again from a different angle.

Tips for Developing Creative Thinking Skills in Children:

- **Encourage Reading Habits**

Reading expands children's vocabulary, introducing them to new concepts they can connect and build upon. These connections spark new ideas, making reading an excellent way to enhance creative thinking.

- **Allow Time for Independent Problem-Solving**

To find solutions, children need time to think critically about problems. This process enables them to analyze situations from various perspectives and come up with creative solutions. No matter how tempting it may be to intervene, allowing children to solve problems independently helps develop their creative thinking skills

- **Promote Questioning**

While children's endless questions may sometimes be exhausting, remember that they stimulate creative thought. Encouraging them to ask questions fosters curiosity and strengthens their creative thinking abilities.

- **Encourage Hypothesis Development**

Formulating hypotheses enhances children's creative thinking. It prompts them to reflect on questions, explore alternative causes and effects, evaluate possibilities, and construct logical arguments. This process involves a great deal of creativity, as they must think through multiple factors simultaneously. When children ask questions, instead of providing direct answers, encourage them to develop their own hypotheses.

- **Encouraging Responsibility in Children**

You may not realize how much creative thinking a regular day at home requires. Giving your child a small responsibility keeps them engaged and encourages them to find easier and more effective ways to complete their tasks. As they tackle their responsibilities, they naturally develop creative problem-solving skills.

Games and Activities to Improve Creative Thinking in Children

- **Modeling/Sculpting**

Playdough, clay, and other sculpting materials provide children with a vast creative space to bring both real and imaginary objects to life. Since there are no limits to what they can create, they fully explore their imagination, enhancing their creative thinking skills.

- **Playing Musical Instruments and Singing**

Any form of musical expression fosters creative thinking. By playing instruments and singing, children learn to process emotions like sadness, anger, or joy. This form of artistic expression helps break language barriers and gives them the freedom to explore their creativity.

- **Puppet Play**

Children love puppets! Puppet play is more complex than it seems, as it requires storytelling, character creation, and dialogue development. Encouraging your child to become a puppeteer strengthens their thinking abilities and creativity. You can also inspire them to make their own puppets at home using fabric scraps, stuffing, and hand-drawn faces. This activity boosts their creativity by requiring them to think outside the box.

- **Guessing/Memory Games and Puzzles**

Guessing games demand concentration and creativity, as they are based on making connections between different concepts and objects. Finding ways to convey an idea without directly stating it enhances a child's creative thinking skills. These activities push them to express themselves in innovative ways.

- **Pretend Play**

Pretend play places children in various imaginary scenarios, fostering their ability to handle real-life situations creatively. Many real-life problems require deep thinking and innovation to solve. By engaging in pretend play, children develop the skills to approach challenges creatively and discover solutions.

- **Drawing and Painting**

Artistic activities like drawing and painting provide children with exciting opportunities to explore creativity and imagination. They can experiment with different techniques using chalk, watercolor, gouache, and more. Watercolor painting, for example, allows them to mix colors and create their own unique shades. Drawing on old T-shirts or unused objects can also be a fun way to encourage creative thinking.

- **Mixed Media Play**

In mixed media activities, children are given unrelated materials like cardboard, buttons, and cotton rolls without specific instructions. Left to their imagination, they eventually find ways to create something meaningful from these random objects. This activity is one of the best ways to enhance creative thinking, as it allows children to work independently and rely solely on their imagination.

- **Scientific Activities and Creative Thinking**

Scientific activities are not just about teaching children specific topics; they are meant to inspire curiosity about the world around them. Science helps children develop creative thinking skills by encouraging them to form hypotheses, explore solutions, and experiment with different ideas. When solving problems during scientific activities, children effectively use their creative thinking and problem-solving abilities.

Conclusion

Creative thinking enhances children's problem-solving skills, allowing them to explore their ideas and imagination. When faced with a challenge, children rely on their creativity to find solutions. For example, if two children want to play with a toy car but don't have one, they might use a pair of slippers as a substitute.



Beyond problem-solving, creative thinking also helps children express themselves. Identifying emotions and finding the right words can be difficult, especially for young children. However, by developing creative thinking skills, they can learn to express their feelings and ideas in unconventional ways.

Additionally, creative thinking exercises nurture curiosity. These activities break down barriers that limit free thinking, allowing children to bring their creative ideas to life. As a result, they develop an interest in new concepts and continue exploring innovative ideas.

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