A Socio-Economic Game as a Means of Stimulating Student Activity

Alexey Mikhailovich Kamenskiy

State Educational Institution of Higher Professional Education "Leningrad Regional Institute of Education Development", Chkalovsky Avenue 25a letter A, 197136 St. Petersburg, Russia

Abstract – **The purpose of this paper is to study the issues of students' self-management in the mass school, taking into account the formed motivation of students. Method applied comprises large-scale and long-term socio-economic modelling. The author proposes non-standard forms of stimulating children's activity related to the economic and socio-political aspects regarding the implementation of school extracurricular educational program. The article reveals the role of the social partnership within educational organization, the possibility of using the educational potential of the city in increasing the effectiveness of the educational process applied in the mass secondary school. The proposed model bases on the interaction of students, teachers, and parents.**

Keywords – **students' self-management, socio-economic game, after-hours activity, cluster approach, state-public management, educational system, educational process' participants interaction model.**

1. Introduction

The search for the most appropriate ways of organizing school life has been carried out for a long time. However, the modern period of the mass school development is characterized by an increased need for the development of a variety of forms regarding implementation of children's activity. The era of

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compulsory education, built on a compulsory basis, is coming to an end [1], [2]. The time comes for self-education, self-improvement, and self-development of a person, starting from a very early age. Ideas and experience laid by the great educators of the past A.S. Makarenko, V.A. Sukhomlinsky, and I.P. Ivanov [3], [4], [5] can creatively communicate and develop transferring these views on school activities with reference to the time to come, but taking into account modern realities, as well. This is confirmed by the views of modern researchers [6], [7]. The creation of new "educational systems" at school [9], the implementation of postulates of "social pedagogy", "success pedagogy", "authority pedagogy", "event pedagogy" [10] also confirm this.

The hypothesis of this paper is the assumption that the stimulation of student activity during school and non-school hours will occur more efficiently if a set of socio-economic gaming techniques is used in organizing the system of intraschool interaction comprising participants in the educational process.

The purpose of the study is to build a model for the implementation of student activity on the basis of a school-wide game "Our City". The scientific novelty of the proposed author's approach consists of combining a relevant idea of building a power vertical with the intensification of the own activities of all participants in the educational process, which contributes resolving the contradictions contained in the stated problems, which are developing the foundations of self-management in a mass secondary school. Thus, the *objectives* of the study are as follows:

- Analysis of the experience gained in the implementation of ideas to stimulate student activity during school and non-school hours;
- Construction of an economic education system of schoolchildren through the process of attracting them to practical business activities in the format of a school-wide game;
- Organization of gaming political activity of schoolchildren, modeling the electoral system of self-governing bodies.

2. Methodology

Achieving the stated purpose and testing the advanced hypothesis were carried out using a set of theoretical research methods (interdisciplinary analysis and synthesis of culturological, sociological, psychological and pedagogical literature on the problem, synthesis, classification, modeling and design of systems and processes in their development). The use of empirical methods was based on the use of participant pedagogical observation [1], [2]. The research included the study of pedagogical experience [6], [9], [10], written and oral surveys and expert assessment.

3. Results: a model of implementation of student activity

In the modern version of the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation", a term "self-management" is replaced by the concept of "collegiality" [11]. Theoretically, this approach expands the participation of subjects within educational activities in school management, since collegiality implies coordination of the majority and managerial decisions with a team of adults and children. In practice, managerial decisions can be made only in a very narrow legal range, as a rule, without affecting stakeholders' essential interests.

Thus, it can be stated that today the main problem in the development of school student self-management or, in fact, co-management (collegiality) is to determine the scope of competence for collegial school management bodies.

In practice, as a rule, an impact on the extracurricular part of school life is the most accessible for students, since it is less regulated than the curricular one. Students can take part in the planning and preparation of school-wide events, organize the activities of formal and informal structural and infrastructure school units, implement the planned projects both independently, and in collaboration with the school's social partners [12].

The *structure of the modern school community* is generally very mosaic. It may include additional education departments, school sports clubs, school museums, children's organizations (pioneers, Russian Schoolchildren Movement, Yunarmiya), interest clubs, etc. Finally, a class is a basic unit of children's school team.

Today's main difficulty lies in the organization of interaction and mutual support of various structures of children's school team [6]. Since the time of restructuring and the gradual disintegration of children's school organizations, like Pioneers and Youth Communist League, creative pedagogical teams have been looking for the ways to integrate various types of student activity within the school-wide educational space. Over the past two or three decades, various models of school educational systems have begun to take shape: School-Town, School-Republic, School-Ship Crew, School-Platform for Socially-Oriented Projects. But the key issue in various models of school educational systems remains the issue of the interaction regarding intraclass self-management system with the school-wide system.

Due to the limited range of decisions taken by children at school and even more in class, it would be more correct to call these systems neither self-management nor even collegiality, but the systems of support for the manifestation of children's activity.

In the outlined context, the task of school principals is to establish the interaction between the activity of children in the class and school-wide events. A long-term game "Our City" in Lyceum No. 590 of St. Petersburg is one of the examples of the children's school activity development, which is based on the principle of self-management and self-organization. In this game, school extracurricular activity simulates the life of a metropolitan city.

The game "Our City" covers the age range of students of the 5th-11th grades. At the beginning of the school year, during a month, an election campaign is held with coverage in school media and debates of applicants. In the final, schoolchildren elect the Children's Duma, Arbitral Tribunal and the Governor. The life of the School City is organized in accordance with the principle of separation powers, as it should be in a democratic society. The Duma makes the school life laws, liaises with voters, and approves the budget for extra-curricular activities. The Arbitral Tribunal deals with disputes and the voluntary participation in the proceedings of both conflicting parties, which is an obligatory condition. The Governor forms the government, appoints the heads of the committees, the nomination of members who are agreed upon with the Duma. The composition of the committees is made up of representatives of classes and academic parallels. For example, the Media Committee consists of editors of class newspapers and websites, while the school's Culture Committee includes representatives of the culture-into-masses sector of each class. Thus, there is no "unemployment" in the lyceum.

Each child gets a public assignment, which he/she chooses independently. It is very important that, as a result of self-management activities, schoolchildren do not feel that they are appointed heads, but they can actually manage their own activities, and the activities of other children. During the inauguration ceremony of the Governor of the School City, the elects of the children's community take an oath, the text which contains the words about serving

selflessly not to their own interests, but the needs and aspirations of people nearby. The emblem of Lyceum No. 590 depicts a bee (more than a hundred schoolchildren participated in the competition for the best school symbol); it is not only a symbol of diligence that carries the honey of knowledge, but also an example of collectivism. Honeycomb depicted on the emblem, painted in different colors, says that all people are different, each of them is a bright individuality. The same tendency towards the combination of the individual and the collective is reflected in the text of the school anthem, which was approved by the students through competition, as well.

The infrastructure of the lyceum extracurricular life is modeled after the arrangement of the activities of a metropolitan city. In addition, regarding the power structures of the Duma, the Arbitral Tribunal and the Governor's Office with the appointed committees, the City has its own media: a newspaper, a daily radio program, a television studio, a magazine, a school website with sub-sections of class websites, a social group of the Lyceum in VKontakte with more than 2.5 thousand participants. There is a souvenir factory, a café, an art gallery, a tour desk, a stadium with various sports sections, a theater, a cinema club, a post office, a bank, a tax service, a labor exchange, and many more in the School City. The infrastructure of the School City is constantly completed and developed. The Rubik's Cube Club, the Children's Academy of Sciences, the Bureau of Inventions and Innovation Offers were established during the school year 2016-2017.

The economic component of this game gives a special dynamic to the development of the school-wide project "Our City" [13], [14], bearing a separate name – an intraschool monetary system (IMS) with its own game currency – "ecu", which has been "working" in the game for many years, and in recent years it has been completely converted into the electronic format.

Initially, students are given the same starting amounts. Then they can either spend them or earn independently. The students quickly realized that it is more efficient to do this by joining as companies and firms. Thus, the company "All for Barbie" in the period of the first appearance of this toy on the shelves of real stores, but in the absence of accessories for the game, began to produce clothes, shoes, furniture for the popular doll and sell it for "ecus" to its fellows. This children's campaign included more than seventy students. The firm "Scarlet Flower" undertook a task to provide qualified care for all the plants at school, and the children's Duma considered it expedient to provide these guys with a "budget" salary. The children's advertising agency "Inform-Bureau" generates its income by creating and distributing the adverts about activities of other students' firms. The firm "Merry Schoolboy" organizes game breaks, various entertainment lotteries, and contests. The association "Educational Assistant" specializes in making cheat sheets, the writing of which makes it better to understand the educational material.

The "ecus" earned, in addition to current expenses, can be spent at auctions and fairs held at the lyceum every academic term, where such items as stationery, toys, sweets are exhibited and sold. But in order to ensure the maximum return of funds to the school bank, otherwise the IMS game cannot be started up in a new turn, the intangible goods should also be put on sale. An extra day of holidays is still the most popular lot. It can only be purchased by the whole class. Classes enthusiastically add up their personal earnings in "ecus" and redeem this prize. On this day, students are taken on a tour. So-called "indulgences for an unsatisfactory mark" are eagerly bought up by schoolchildren. There is an agreement with the teaching staff of the lyceum that a submitter of this document will be allowed to retake the course, and unsatisfactory mark will not be written in the gradebook. Friendly caricatures of a favorite teacher, the right to sit in the director's chair for five minutes, a day without homework, musical breaks. and of course, a disco are also popular with students. The children's government constantly has to come up with all the new attractive prizes for students, so that they do not lose interest in the game.

In addition to the economic and socio-political components, the game "Our City" has also a career-oriented effect. Students willingly change their in-game roles in it. A student can change the role of an employee of the school bank into a radio host, and after working at the souvenir factory, students can attend rehearsals of the school theater. None of the career guidance commissions will give such a reasonable recommendation as a recommendation that a person can give himself by trying one or another type of activity. This approach is especially effective if the activity is not imitative, but benefits the people around. Thus, the game "Our City" actually ceased to be a game and made a single strong fabric of the diverse school life.

The results of the school year are summarized at a large-scale school-wide student conference, in which the reports on the activities of key structures of the School City are presented, particularly significant achievements are noted and the most topical problems and prospects for the development of the lyceum are identified. These data become the main material for the publication of the annual order "On the Encouragement of Students", which includes most of the lyceum students.

The age range of the game "Our City" includes students of the 5th-11th grades. Primary students take part as interns. Secondary students willingly play the whole variety of in-game roles, while senior students hold the key positions in this game as managers, mentors, and consultants. A special function in this project is performed by adults. All key structures of the School City have a teacher-advisor, but it is very important for him/her to be able to stay in the role of an advisor without replacing the children's activity with his/her own leadership.

Representatives of elected children's bodies (a speaker of the Duma, the Director of the Arbitral Tribunal and the Governor of the School City) are members of the highest school management body – the Lyceum Council – in an advisory capacity.

The school management system is mobile. Itallows both the establishment of new management bodies and the reform of existing ones to fulfill the newly emerging tasks. The interaction of collegial management bodies, each at its own level of competence, determines the social-state nature of the management of the system. The first level of management connects the employees of the district education department with the school administration, the second one – the school administration with parents and school employees [15]. At the third level, the contact of adults and children takes place [16], [17], [18]. Representatives of all management levels should be included in the Council of the educational organization, which is its highest governing body in accordance with the Charter.

The District Schools Council is a separate governing body, which provides interschool interaction and coordinates the work of the neighborhood educational infrastructure. The Council of Schools operates in close relationship with the Municipal Council and its Education Promotion Commission. The actions of all management structures are aimed at expanding the diverse infrastructure of both the educational district as a whole and the internal infrastructure of educational institutions located in it.

The high degree of diversity of the educational organization's infrastructure creates the risks of mismatch of actions in the interaction of participants in the educational process, which can be observed in recruiting children in different groups, scheduling and defining the topics of lessons. The author has developed a cluster mechanism to overcome this mismatch. In each subject cluster, there are pedagogical partners – these are neighboring schools, pre-school institutions, universities, libraries, museums. This approach complies with the basic requirements for an innovative educational program: structure, conditions, result. In this cluster, a student is a systemically important factor, which shapes a pedagogical result. The construction of the cluster is based on the leading pedagogical ideas of developing the individuality of participants in the educational process, authority pedagogy, that underlie health-saving technologies. If education is focused on the development of individuality, a child has a motivation of interest, he/she studies with pleasure. When lessons are given by teachers, who are truly authoritative for a child, the agreement arises.

It is necessary to create both at school and at home an environment for a teenager, in which he/she feels him/herself significant, needed by other people, manifests his/her individuality. The formation of a person is possible only in an activity, but in the activity organized independently, not by coercion, in the activity in which he/she is responsible. Such position is determined by the personal-activity approach designated as the main approach in federal state educational standards.

4. Discussion

A diversity of types of activities at school for a modern teenager, which includes both curricular and extracurricular parts [19], helps to orient the educational process into the development of the individuality regarding each particular child [8]. An organized school-wide and related intraclass student self-management system is an effective tool that harmonizes this diversity and allows a child to carry out a continuous search for self-determination.

The modern children's activity is aimed not only at serving the society, but also at personal fulfillment. It is intended to harmonize the two opposing, but not contra-directional principles "I" and "We". A close-knit, strong "We" cannot exist without a bright original "I". Vice versa, "I" of a person cannot be fully revealed without "We", which appreciates each of its members, respects the individuality of each person.

Student self-management is intended not only to fill the children's free time – this is life training, rehearsal of the relationship they will encounter in the real world after graduating from school. It is necessary in the educational process not less than physics, mathematics, history and a foreign language. The overall effect of upbringing and, therefore, the country's life in the near future depends on how efficiently it is arranged at school and not formalized. Future directors and deputies gain their first leadership experience already at school. It is necessary for children since childhood to learn to be honest, decent, caring people, who care about the common cause. Then, in general, the country will become a prosperous and wealthy power.

As a result of the implementation of the model of organizing a school-wide game "Our City", the relationship between the participants in the

educational process has significantly improved, as evidenced by the data of psychological and pedagogical surveys conducted at the lyceum over the past few years. Thus, among secondary students, the degree of satisfaction with relationships among the classmates in 2012 was 38% and by 2017 it had grown up to 57%; among senior students, this figure has changed from 52% to 72%. During this period, the degree of satisfaction with the quality of educational services has increased from 33% to 43.5% at the secondary level, from 29% to 33% – at the senior secondary level. At the same time, a low degree of satisfaction with educational activities and relationship in the lyceum is hardly observed. There is a noticeable improvement in relations between schoolchildren and teachers. In 2012, a high degree of satisfaction at the secondary level was 31%, in 2017 this figure rose up to 42%. At the senior secondary level, it changed from 41% to 53%. The specific dynamics is publicly available on the lyceum website. Schoolchildren's academic performance has also increased significantly, which is confirmed by the results of final tests, the values of which exceed the data for the city. The positive dynamics with respect to majors of the lyceum is especially noticeable. The students get the scores for passing a USE in physics, mathematics, Russian, literature, social studies, and other subjects, that are above-average for St. Petersburg and, as for the leading major of the lyceum – informatics, the score has exceeded the citywide one by 15-20 points for many years.

5. Conclusion

The implemented model allows overcoming the emerging stereotypes of antagonistic perception of each other by an "asset" and a "passive", since they are absent as such in this model. Each in-game role is important. Being a banker or an editor of a school newspaper is no less significant than a deputy of the children's Duma.

Due to the actual efforts made by students, life in the lyceum becomes more diverse and more interesting, which means that students get vivid experience of the independent transformation of reality.

Thus, the designated model allows putting into practice the basic principles of establishing and developing students' self-management:

1. The election of all students' self-governing bodies.
2. The separation of powers of these bodies and their interaction.
3. Publicity and openness of their activities.
4. Freedom of criticism and exchange of views.
5. Systematic turnover of leadership and renewal of activities.

6. Humanism in relation to each student, the priority of his/her interests.
7. Pedagogical support of children's activity.

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