

Chapter 8

Involving Adolescents in Getting Acquainted With the Problems of Regional Business: Educational Game Journalist

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ABSTRACT

The game Journalist has established itself as one of the complex forms of intensive additional education, as a way of active and thoughtful acquaintance of high school students with the surrounding world. Participating in the game, adolescents visit modern enterprises as journalists, get acquainted with the problems and successes, specialists, peculiarities of the production of this enterprise, and as a result of this visit, they prepare real journalistic materials that are subsequently published in various media. The chapter describes the experience of playing in Latvia and Russia on the basis of a school, a university, the organization of additional education, the editorial offices of local media, and local self-government bodies; mechanisms of interaction with business during the preparation and conduct of the game; discusses the possible impact of the game on local life, the degree of its openness, public dialogue in solving pressing problems; and the establishment, through the game, of closer links between education and other spheres of public life in a city or region.

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WHO NEEDS THE “MIRROR FOR THE CITY” AND WHY?

To look at the mirror, at least occasionally, is important not only for people but for cities as well. To know how a city is seen with the eyes of, say, adolescents, should be exciting and essential for the city.

In turn, it is essential for children to acquire an ability to see regular things unusually, to find something unusual, mysterious, amazing in what seems simple and everyday. Reflexive journalism is one of the possible ways to perform this.

We offered the teenagers, students of 9-11 classes of different schools, as well as interested students an adventure: to try in just one working day (in fact, in 360 minutes (!)) to make a newspaper reflecting their views and thoughts, their understanding of the city. The beginners were offered to work with not the city as a whole, but with only some places in one district.

During the game, the participants acted as correspondents and photographers, analysts and editors, they tried to overcome their shyness, interviewing strangers in unusual places, shown creative courage in creating journalistic texts, as it says, “straight from the wheels.”

The opportunity to see how your impressions and thoughts are transformed into a published text for a short game time is breathtaking. But this also allows feeling responsible for what has been said and especially for the written word.

Whether the participants manage to approach unfamiliar places and people in such a short time in order to find something important and interesting in them and to write about it in the way that this would capture others, is to be decided by readers of the newspaper where the texts of the game participants will be published.

At the same time, initially no one can guarantee the result, the game is a game. Adults certainly help, but the result depends on participants themselves. This is specifically what makes the participant curious and fascinated by the game. Uncertainty and risk are the native elements of adolescents (Pusyrevsky & Epshtein, 2011)

This or similar text opened the newspaper, the materials of which were prepared by high school students during the first business game “Journalist” in 2005, which took place in St. Petersburg within the frameworks of the “Mirror for the City” project. (Pusyrevsky & Epshtein, 2011)

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