Student initiatives and personal self-realization in professional geographic education

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Abstract. The article deals with a topic of personal self-realization on the basis of student initiatives, which are implemented in the system of higher professional geographic education. The relevance of the research is dictated by the modern requirements of society for the upbringing of a harmoniously developed human personality, capable of loving, preserving and increasing the natural and historical heritage. It is the geographical environment that becomes the basis for self-expression and self-realization of a person, regardless of gender and race. The article examines the historical continuity of geographical culture distribution among the younger generation based on the interaction of educational organizations with social scientific organizations from the beginning of the 20th century to the current state of higher geographical education. The author submits that support for student initiatives and active involvement of students in a wide range of university activities contribute to the creation of an optimal social and educational environment aimed at creative self-development and self-realization of students' personality and determine the goal and objectives of extracurricular work in the system of higher professional geographical education. The materials of the article contain generalization of the results of multi-year experience of various types of extracurricular work with youth groups (over twenty years) at the Pedagogical Institute of Irkutsk State University.

1. Introduction
Integration of the world and Russian educational space is based on and implemented with an active life position in education of a person who can and is able to work with large and small social groups of different ages, gender, health status, racial and religious affiliation. This is precisely the combination or contexture of the world humanistic ideology with the state policy of Russia in the field of modernization of education.

Modern Russian higher pedagogical education had undertaken to address three groups of systemic problems that have a significant impact on the implementation of principles and directions of the educational process: fundamental theoretical knowledge, practical skills that are in demand by society and development of a harmonious personality.

Strategic agenda of geographic education is competence building in theory, methodology and practice of geography and pedagogical science. In our opinion, this goal can be achieved only with a combination...
of professional training and integration of student initiatives in a single educational field. In the learning process a student realizes his cognitive needs through educational and professional activities, which becomes the sphere of his self-expression.

The most appropriate modalities for implementation of this approach is extracurricular work, with the purpose of promoting student initiatives, creation of an optimal socio-pedagogical educational environment aimed at creative self-development and self-realization of students' personality through the organization of actively inclusion of students in the main forms of geographical culture distribution.

2. Models and method

The authors use methods of analysis and synthesis, literary and historical research methods. The article is based on the primary sources of archival materials of the State Archives of Irkutsk Oblast. The reliability of the research results is achieved through the use of extensive experience of extracurricular work in the professional training of teaching staff.

3. Results and discussion

Geography is one of the few natural and humanitarian disciplines in contact with the real world at the present time. Its laws, scientific abstractions and hypotheses arise from generalizations of real physical and social phenomena. A student is immersed in the geographical environment every day, participates in geographical processes, contacts with wildlife, society and a specific person. He is a participant in socio-economic relations on the territory, he is a subject (if not yet real, then potential) of changes in the environment, a subject of its transformation. This is one of the strongest aspects of geography in the formation of personality. It is the geographical environment that becomes the basis for self-expression and self-realization of a person, regardless of gender and race.

V.P. Maksakovskii in 1998 was the first to note that geography has a strong culturological basis and outlined the task of forming a geographic culture in society. V.P. Maksakovskii made a scientific definition of this concept, which includes four components: 1) the geographical picture of the world (nature, population, economy and interaction between society and nature), 2) geographical thinking, which is based on a spatial, territorial approach that forms the “image of a place”, image of a territory”, 3) methods of geography and 4) language of geography [1]. In other words, geographical culture as an inalienable quality of a person is the basis of his self-expression through cultural self-determination, through the choice of meaning and ways of life. Human culture is a person's self-determination regarding the culture of society [2, 3]. The development of geographical culture is largely facilitated by the experience of real and demanded research and investigation.

By responding to inquiries of individualization of education, the study of geography can imply the achievement of a variety of educational goals and educational routes of students. We will note those that reveal or betray a powerful impetus to the development of personality. These are classical education in geography; scientific geographical research; vocational guidance work (planning a professional career), work in the field of public geographical education (popularization of geography). Setting individual development goals, taking into account the motivational types of students, will reveal their interest in geography from the point of view of choosing different educational routes indicated above.

Geographic objects have various possibilities that can be converted into a resource for solving educational problems. And this is also one of the advantages of geographic environment as the basis for personality formation. Working with actually existing, but not abstract phenomena of nature and society, a student can realize interesting activities, contributing to the maximum implementation of his development tasks. The presence of monotowns in Irkutsk oblast enables formulating a number of problems for implementation of socio-economic projects or research activities (educational and scientific). V.B.
Sochava Institute of Geography of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IG SB RAS) can serve as a resource for the development of scientific practices in geography.

The resourceful content of geographic environment predetermines the filling of the educational space with various knowledge holders and organization of joint subject and practical activities of educational organizations and scientific laboratories, museums, libraries, East Siberian Branch of the Russian Geographical Society (VSORGO), etc. The necessity of the interaction from the point of view of educating tasks for a moral human being and creating conditions for its self-realization was understood by geographers and teachers at the dawn of the 20th century. Their activities were closely connected with the activities of the Irkutsk Regional Branch of the Russian Geographical Society (successor of the VSORGO); it is firmly embedded in the interaction of pedagogical education since the founding of the Irkutsk Teachers' Institute with the East Siberian Department of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society.

Alexander Ivanovich Lin'kov, the first teacher (of history and geography since 1909) and Anatoliy Pavlovich Detishchev, the latter member of the administrative committee of the East Siberian Department of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society paved the way for this collaboration. It is worth noting that, as a teacher of physics and natural history, Anatoliy Pavlovich devoted great importance to study of local nature. Students of the Institute systematically made short and distant excursions, replenished the VSORGO museum of mineralogy with exhibits. The tragic events of that time should also be recalled. Anatoliy Pavlovich's life was cut short in August 1914 during a scientific expedition to Khamar-Daban [4]. But local history activity did not stop, its activities played a huge role in the further development of geographical education, becoming an integral part of the educational process at the Irkutsk Teachers' Institute up to the present day.

Youth clubs become a part of the process of forming a geographic educational environment as a basis for self-realization and self-development of a person. Today they are becoming increasingly popular being an integral part of the educational process and becoming one type of educational routes. They already existed in the twenties of the last century as a form of extracurricular work. This is evidenced by the report on the activities of the pedagogical faculty for 1924-1925, which includes also the report of the student scientific club of local history, about the work it has done for the year. The first paragraph of the report contains the goals and objectives indicated as follows: “Familiarization of the club members with the productive forces of the region, with its physical-geographical, botanical, zoological, geological aspects, with its population, with the main trades, occupations, etc., sum up, cover the region from all sides, if possible, deepening the work in sections. The task is to give methodological skills and the ability to navigate in any issue of local history”. Scientific and educational activities were the most important.

The report presents a clear arrangement of the club activity. The workplan of the club included general reviews of the region and masterclasses. Based on the masterclass materials, students made their own report, territorially detailing the study object. The professor's theme is, for instance, "Gold mining industry of the region", the student's theme is “Gold mining at Lake Baikal” In addition to lectures at the university students participated in museum trips: “1. Zoological Museum – zoological outline of the region. 2. Museum of Ethnology – lecture “Trip to Karagars”.

The scientific leader of the club was the archaeologist, ethnographer and anthropologist Professor B.E. Petri. The participants are quite different; there were students of the pedagogical faculty and secondary schools. The club activities were divided into five sections: archaeological, geological, biological, study of small peoples of the North and for revolutionary Irkutsk.

The archaeological section challenge oneself to study and research the prehistoric monuments of the region, through independent exploration and taking an active part in the excavations of local archaeologists. At the meetings reports, abstracts of incoming books were presented, as well as reports on the latest scientific achievements in the field of archeology were prepared. The results of successful
excursions by the members of the section were published in the issues of the journal “Local History in the Baikal Region”.

The main task of the section for study of small peoples of the North was: “to study the way of life and customs of the natives of the North, to educate trained technical workers for scientific expeditions to study small peoples of the North and to publish experimental programs in this area”. During the presented year, the members of this section studied four nationalities: Karagas, tribal, Sayots and Orochons. The result of practical work was the expedition of the participants to the Sayots and to the Turukhany region.

The section for the study of revolutionary Irkutsk set itself the main goal to select guides for excursion programs in the Museum of the Revolution. The biological and geological sections were under development at that time; however, the initiative to create them came from the students.

Collaboration with various organizations through correspondence and exchange of literature has been established. Such as the committee for the study of small peoples of the North, the organizing bureau of Irkutsk, the Kazan society of area studies specialists, the Omsk land management club, the Arkhangelsk society of local history, the Tomsk club for the study of the natives and the Zarinskii district [5].

The historical continuity of close interaction of educational organizations and social and scientific institutions in the process of geographical culture formation is being implemented at the present stage. Educational and professional activities in combination with extracurricular activities are becoming an important sphere for self-expression of students. A student realizes his cognitive needs through learning activities. Therefore, the self-realization of a person at the university is very important, since it is impossible to implement the principles of the competence paradigm without it (a student cannot form his competence without showing his own activity, including the cognitive sphere). Several works are devoted to the phenomenon of self-realization of a student's personality in a university [6-10]. Through self-realization and cognitive need, a student develops, acquires new knowledge, skills and realizes himself in the future.

The most suitable field for the implementation of this approach is extracurricular work, which aims to support student initiatives, to promote creation of an optimal social and pedagogical educational environment aimed at creative self-development and self-realization of students' personality. In extracurricular activities we integrated all available forms of organizing activities aimed at creative self-realization of students' personality, which are represented by the following types of extracurricular work:

- Research work of students;
- Career guidance and assistance in the employment of students;
- Assistance in additional education to the major professional training;
- Activity management of the youth club of the Russian Geographical Society “Portulan”.

The research work of students is carried out according to the department's research: “Natural and social complexes of Eastern Siberia and the componentwise research” and “Methods of teaching geography and health and safety at school and university”. Students conduct theoretical and empirical, research supervised by a lecturer. Research results are tested at scientific and practical conferences at various levels and published in scientific journals. 80% of students participate in scientific festivals and competitions, make reports at conferences and are published in scientific journals and collections.

The platform “Searching for Captain Grant” is a traditional and, to be sure, especially popular event in the complex of advertising campaigns held by the Irkutsk State University and the Pedagogical Institute during the “Welcome Days”.

The development of a youth club is a traditional form of extracurricular work. The V.B. Sochava Institute of Geography of the SB RAS and the Irkutsk Regional Branch of the Russian Geographical Society are traditionally partners in organizing this activity. The priority club's activities are as follows: science and education; information; environmental protection; history and local history and expeditions. The goal of the “Portulan” club is to popularize geography among the younger generation, study the
geography of the country and its cultural and historical heritage, and attract young people to scientific creativity and research activities. The tasks are designed to maximally stimulate realization of creative potential of youth in the field of geography and related branches of knowledge.

We believe that club activities perform three most important functions in the process of self-realization of student's personality: compensatory, stimulating and integrative.

Students - club members show, as a rule, a greater interest in cognitive activity, and know how to organize it, etc.

The club activity also stimulates teachers to search for creative ways of organizing educational and cognitive process. The activity of clubs, as the least programmed, more creative and innovatively organized, often being a "zone of disorder", is able to maintain an active state of the educational system, and prompt the process of its development as a whole.

4. Conclusion
And finally, we should emphasize that an important feature of the geographical culture development is its connection with the personality, consciousness, professional activity of future specialists and interaction with objects and subjects of geographical space.

In our work we rely on the desire of young people for self-realization in professional education and in the surrounding social space. Therefore, the task of higher geographic education at the present stage is to teach students the ways of action, which will allow them to study effectively, realize their educational needs, cognitive interests and future professional challenges.

The support for student initiatives and active involvement of students in distribution of geographical culture create an optimal socio-pedagogical educational environment aimed at creative self-development and self-realization of students' personality. It is they who determine the goal and objectives of today’s extracurricular work in the system of higher professional geographic education.

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