

Sukhomlinsky News

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Work education

In this issue we continue our translation of extracts from the sixth chapter of *Pavlysh Secondary School*, which is on work education.

The material base for work education (pedagogical considerations)

The creation of the material infrastructure to allow children to become involved in work at an early age, and to make available a variety of work activities connected with both agricultural and industrial production, is a serious educational issue.

In an earlier chapter I gave a detailed description of our material infrastructure for work education, our classrooms, workshops, laboratories, and greenhouses. I will now briefly examine the pedagogical, educational aspect of these facilities.

All our material facilities are designed in such a way that even young children can learn to use relatively complex tools and equipment. Before being allowed to use mechanical tools, students carry out set tasks with hand tools. For example, students only gain access to an electric bandsaw or circular saw (a disk saw made especially for young children) after they have learnt to use a hand fretsaw. They must be able to use the fretsaw skilfully to complete an assignment that confers the right to use their first child-friendly mechanical tool. The boys and girls strive to master hand work skills as well as possible, as a step towards making the transition to machine tools. With the help of a mechanical disk saw, it is possible to cut timber into blocks, boards, and slats, to provide material for further woodworking. The mechanism is set up in such a way that children may independently adjust the working parts depending on the purpose of for which the material is being cut. Next to the bandsaw and the circular saws are children's planing machines, also fitted with safety features to prevent any accident.

A similar sequence and similar incentives are involved in working with metal, in construction and modelling. Work facilities for our youngest students are equipped with special children's tools (for students aged seven to ten).

[Continued on the following page]

Infrastructure for work education

Dear readers,

This month I am continuing to translate chapter six of 'Pavlysh Secondary School'. This month's extract focuses on the infrastructure developed at Sukhomlinsky's school in order to implement the work education program, and the way this infrastructure facilitated peer tutoring.

Sukhomlinsky wanted primary school students (in grades one to four) to be able to work alongside secondary school students (in grades five to ten). In this way, they would be inspired by the skill of older students and learn from them. This also had benefits for the older students, who gained self-respect and developed morally, as they passed on their skills to younger children.

Work education was integral to Sukhomlinsky's whole approach to values education. Students were taught not just to understand the world around them, but to transform it for the better and make a contribution to society.

One of this month's stories refers to 'lark-shaped bread rolls', a traditional dish. The photo I have included was accessed at: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Праздник_Жаворонки_2012_14.JPG

Best wishes,

Alan Cockerill

Work education infrastructure (cont.)

We have metalworking lathes and drills, made by our senior students and teachers, allocated specifically for the use of children aged eight to ten. The creation of this equipment solves a major pedagogical problem. What attracts children to machine tools is the fact that they are smaller and slightly simplified copies of real factory machine tools. To earn the right to work on this equipment, the children patiently work at mastering the use of hand tools. As they progress, those who are successful in working on a lathe gain the right to work on a children's milling machine, and on a lathe made for a factory.

Students in the middle and senior years gain the right to carry out complex operations on lathes, drilling machines and milling machines intended for factory use, only after they have made several relatively complex parts and components for smaller, children's machine tools. Nearby are assembly benches for young designers. The workspaces at one bench are equipped with more complex tools, while the other bench is for less complex types of work. The young beginner technicians work next to more experienced senior students, learning from them, and striving to gain the right to work with more complex tools and equipment.

There is an analogous relationship between the material infrastructure and work creativity in our electronics and radio electronics activities. To gain access to the complex instruments and equipment at our children's electricity generating station, the children need to construct three working models of generators with their own hands (each successive model is more complex than the preceding one), and connect them to small working models of machines like winnowing machines, threshing machines

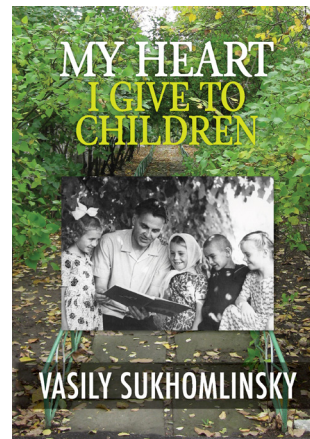
and so on. The right to assemble a transistor radio is gained by assembling a valve radio.

Children aged from ten to twelve work at our children's power station under the supervision of senior students. They start up and stop the engine, turn on the generator, and connect it with devices driven by the current (a small saw, a miniature metal cutting machine, a mechanical fretsaw). This is all very interesting, and gets the children involved, but every child working at the children's power station dreams of gaining the right to move on to the training power station (for the middle and senior years). Here there are several internal combustion engines and generators of varying capacity (16 Kw, 4.5 Kw, 2 Kw, 0.5 Kw) producing direct and alternating current, a transformer, and a station for charging accumulators. Only those who have developed the basic skills in managing the engine and generator at the children's power station are allowed to work at the training (or 'real' as the children call it) power station.

The children patiently develop their skills. This earns them the right to learn to drive a small car with a miniature combustion engine (driven by students aged eight or nine). Having learnt to drive the miniature car, students dream of riding a motorcycle, and then of driving a real car. The logical progression in work, the logic behind the creation and use of our material infrastructure, leads to the fact that all students completing grades seven and eight know how to manage a stationary internal combustion engine, a miniature car and a motorcycle. Approximately 75% of those completing grade eight can drive a car and a tractor. All students in grades nine and ten not only drive a tractor but also use it for work. I repeat that this is not specialisation, but just the

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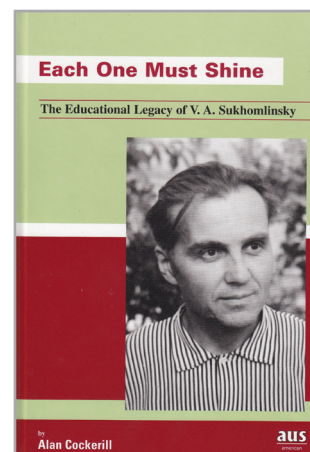
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ABC of technical training. In our times the ability to drive a car and a tractor should be just as normal for everyone as the ability to use an electric hotplate.

A material base can only really increase when work is characterised by a degree of reproduction. The harvests produced on our experimental plots, in our orchard and vineyard, and the production of young fruit trees, are all of considerable material value. A proportion is donated free of charge to the collective farm and to parents, but a proportion is also sold, generating funds to meet the cultural needs of the students (excursions, purchasing musical instruments and literature for reading), and for the future expansion of our infrastructure. With the proceeds of sales, the school purchases electrical motors, materials for the electronics clubs, and internal combustion engines. The children labour, not only to learn how to work, but also to create the material conditions for more complex, intellectually challenging work. From our funds the school has also created a fund for providing material assistance to those in need, which is managed by the school's Young Communist League committee and Pioneer group committee.

Types of student work activity and educational requirements for its organisation

In order to organise work education properly, and to take full advantage of the educational potential of work, we classify types of work according to certain attributes.

1. *Social significance.* In some types of work the social significance is obvious, in others it is more difficult for a child to recognise. Students may be involved in planting a woodland belt to protect fields from erosion, or an oak grove, and caring for it for several years, on the one hand, or in sweeping the classroom floor every day and wiping dust

from the desks. In both cases the students are carrying out work that is essential for society and has great educational significance. But whereas in the first case the students are directly participating in the creation of society's material and technological base, in the second case their work does not go beyond self-service. In the second case the work is unable to give rise to the same feelings and convictions as in the first case. At the same time, self-service has its own benefits: educating tidiness, and respect for simple work and for people working in humble, unobtrusive professions.

We seek to include work of varying degrees of social significance in students' lives, and to make sure that work that clearly involves participation in the strengthening of society's material base gradually enters children's lives at an early age. This is of great significance for the education of feelings of honour and pride in work. At the same time, we attach great significance to any work, however uninteresting and difficult it may be. We try to ensure that from early childhood, every student feels that if they do not collect manure and apply it to the soil, if they do not work hard on a hot summer's day or a frosty winter's day, they will not produce any material, or, consequently, any spiritual benefits, and will not find joy in life.

2. *The correspondence between study goals and educational goals* (where 'educational goals' refers specifically to moral education). Some types of work are carried out with the primary aim of acquiring knowledge and skills; others are pursued purely for the education of character, to form moral concepts, convictions, and habits, to gain moral experience. Although acquiring scientific knowledge and work skills includes the formation of philosophical convictions, and consequently a student is being

educated as they study, the primary aim of the work process is to learn, to know, and to acquire skills.

Work conducted in the process of studying is always cognitive in nature. The goal of the work is considered to be achieved if the student learns well. Apart from classroom work, using books, cognitive aims are prominent in experiments on the school plots, laboratory work in physics and chemistry, measurements carried out on location, the collection of plant specimens etc. It is very important that in all these types of work the ultimate goal is not just to learn about the world. The experimental work conducted by our students serves dual aims: to know and to create, to discover the laws of nature, and to make a least one small corner of the world richer and more beautiful. We seek to ensure that as they study and acquire knowledge, our students also create things of material value (mechanisms and tools in the workshop, seeds and fruits on our plots).

Along with work that is directly connected with study, a major role is played by work that has the principal aim of educating a person's moral qualities, of giving every student the joy and happiness of social work, and feelings of civic pride. This educational goal is achieved when students create material benefits of great social significance. For example, when our students join the Pioneer movement, they plant an oak grove and then spend several years caring for the young oak trees. By the time they graduate from school, they can see the significant results of their work: the oak grove secures the banks of a gully against erosion. In this way we ensure that students' work extends as far as possible beyond the school and school interests, and that each student feels that they are participating in the life of society.

[To be continued next month.]

Stories

Father came home

In one happy family, two little girls, Zina and Zoya, lived and grew. They were both two years old. Every day they waited impatiently for their father to come home from work. The ran to meet their father at the gate, and their father lifted them into his arms, holding Zina in his right arm and Zoya in his left. That was how he entered the house, with his daughters in his arms, and in the house their happy mother welcomed them.

But then a great misfortune visited our land: fascist troops invaded. The father went to the frontline. For three years he fought the invaders. Letters often arrived, in which he asked their mother to kiss Zina and Zoya, and their mother cried as she kissed them. 'Mum, don't cry,' the little girls said. 'Dad will come home...'

Then there were no letters for several months. Suddenly a letter came from their father's friend on the frontline. He wrote to Zina, Zoya, and their mother, that their father and husband had been wounded, and would soon be coming home.

One sunny morning in early spring Zina and Zoya were playing in the garden. They were now five years old. They stood next to a melting snowman, and wondered how they could get it to live for just one more day. Their mother was standing by the house.

'Dad is coming!' she shouted.

Zina and Zoya saw a tall, well built soldier, with a bag over his shoulder, approaching. Joyfully screaming 'Dad!', the girls ran to meet him. They stretched out their arms, expecting that he would lift them into his arms as he always did, Zina in his right arm, and Zoya in his left. But dad was silent, and did not lift them up. The children wanted to take his hands in their little hands, so that he would lift them up, but they suddenly saw that he did not have any arms. The sleeves of his great coat were hanging empty.

The girls lifted their heads and fearfully looked into their father's eyes.

He bent over them, and tears fell from his eyes onto the white snow. Zina and Zoya hugged their father, resting their cheeks on his empty sleeves, and wept.

'Don't worry dad, you don't need to lift us in your arms, we're not little anymore,' whispered Zina.

'We're five already,' added Zoya.

Who takes who home?

At the kindergarten are two five-year-old boys, Vasilko and Tolya. Their mothers work at the animal breeding farm. At six o'clock in the evening the women come to the kindergarten for their children. Vasilko's mother dresses him, takes him by the hand, and leads him, saying, 'Let's go home, Vasilko.'

But Tolya dresses himself, takes his mother by the hand, and leads her saying, 'Let's go home, mum.' The road is covered in snow, through which there is just a narrow path.

Vasilko's mother walks in the snow, while her son takes the path. After all, she is taking him home.

Tolya walks in the snow, while his mother takes the path. After all, he is taking her home.

Twelve years pass. Vasilko and Tolya are now both strong, well-built, handsome young men.

In winter, when the roads are covered with thick snow drifts, Vasilko's mother falls seriously ill.

The same day, Tolya's mother also falls ill.

The doctor lives in a neighbouring village, five kilometres away.

Vasilko goes out on to the street, looks at the snow, and says, 'How can anyone walk through snow like that?' He stands for a while and goes back inside.

But Tolya walks through the deep snow to the neighbouring village and comes back with the doctor.

Grandma's bread rolls

'Where does our homeland begin?' asked our teacher. I came home and thought about it. I remembered my childhood. I tried to find, in the depths of my memory, those recollections that remained from my first sunny mornings and long, long days.

My first memory is of my grandma's hands. She was not idle for a single minute. I remember how she used to knead wheat dough that was as white as could be, while her hands were so dark in contrast. She made lark-shaped bread rolls and put them in the oven. Bread rolls that were so white, while her hands were dark, wrinkled, and trembling.

I asked her, 'Grandma, why are your hands so dark, and your bread rolls so white?'

Grandma answered, 'If my hands were white, there would not be any white dough or bread rolls.'

For me the homeland begins with loving, working hands.

