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Urgent Objectives of Modern Senior Secondary School

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The ideas of career-oriented education are being introduced in our country from 2003. This process is being monitored regarding conditions and opportunities that are provided at school for senior students' education.

This article is an attempt to get the students' feedback, their answers to the following questions: "Is a career-oriented school a place for a student where he/she is taught to choose his/her life style?" "Do the students solve the task of self-determination in respect of their future life and career?"

The basis for this research is the research carried out in the frame of the Project of career-oriented education models approbation in Krasnoyarskiy Krai (2008). 4174 students of grades 9 and 11, who are residents of cities and villages of Krasnoyarskiy Krai, were involved in it. Questionnaire poll was chosen as a method of the research. The questionnaire-form included questions of both types: open and closed. The students were asked to define career-oriented education, single out weak and strong aspects of it, dwell upon the issue how school might influence the choice of their career (vocational self-determination), etc.

The research has led to the following conclusions:

- 1) urban students start solving the tasks of vocational self-determination later than village ones;*
- 2) students of both grades (grade 9 and grade 11) have a very narrow and one-sided idea of career-oriented education and single out only two results of such education, and namely: vocational self-determination and entering a higher education institution;*
- 3) acuteness of vocational self-determination issue doesn't reduce from grade 9 to grade 11.*

It means that discussing senior students' education we can't confine ourselves to changes in curricula only (that is core subjects introduction, choice of the level of mastering subjects (basic, core), elective courses). The whole environment around a student influences the process of his/her self-determination. It can both facilitate and impede this process.

Based on the mentioned above the following objectives of career-oriented education implementation at the present stage have been formulated:

- 1. Creating the opportunities for the students' choice of the level of mastering curricula, courses, practices, projects and other kinds of senior students' activity at every school.*
- 2. Development of the system of pedagogical guidance of the students' self-determination process – providing the circumstances for launch and realization of the students' reflection about their educational way in the context of self-determination in life.*
- 3. Expansion of the borders of a career-oriented school's educational opportunities due to inclusion of a city's / village's, a region's, a country's, the world's resources in its space.*

Keywords: senior secondary school, career-oriented school, educational goals, a senior student's self-determination, career counseling at school

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Challenges to modern school

Changes in social and economic situation in Russia, transition from post-industrial society to informational one, market relations, transition to the society with open entrepreneurial initiative and change in business communication style have resulted in a different goal and nature of labour. Its intensity and tension have increased, the role of a specialist's professionalism and responsibility has grown. The present level of the society's development put in new claims to preparation of school-leavers for life and future career. Constant development of informational environment and accumulation of the society's informational resource, informatization of all aspects of life and human's activity make new demands of the specialists' training quality (A. Toffler, N.F. Rodichev, S.Yu. Rubtsova, P.G. Shchedrovitskiy and others). The vertical mobility system has changed in comparison with bygone – Soviet – time. Modern environment put in claim to the level of culture, education, mobility. We observe the rupture of “career – education” connection which was one-to-one formerly. At the same time it should be born in mind that the world of careers is changing very rapidly. According to many researchers (S.Ya. Batshev, A.P. Belyaeva, A.N. Leibovich, L.M. Mitina, A.Ya. Nain, P.G. Shchedrovitskiy and others), the peculiarity of modern world of careers is that mono-professionalism is being replaced by poly-professionalism. It means that a school-leaver must be prepared to make a choice of his/her future, be able to chose types of activity, resources, ways of achievement, be able to make decisions, identify his/her deficiencies and learn new things, be able to plan, acquire new experience and analyze it turning it into his/her own resource. Thus, young people are expected to have complex competences which, according to P.G. Shchedrovitskiy's point of view, “are taught nowhere” (Shchedrovitskiy, 2000). For instance, according to the survey results,

more than a thousand managers of the Russian Federation enterprises think that “professional knowledge, readiness to be trained, retrained and learn new things, sense of responsibility for the work given are the most significant factors” in personnel selection irrespective of the fact whether an enterprise is successful or not (Remorenko, 2006, p. 32). The research of educational and professional careers of school-leavers and higher education institutions' graduates, done by D.S. Popov, Yu.A. Tyumeneva, Yu.V. Kuzmina, showed that among the factors of an educational and professional career forecast such personality's psychological characteristics as the ability to set tasks and plan their achievement, the ability to use own resources sparingly, the ability to communicate effectively, estimate own resources adequately, the ability to overcome difficulties are equally important on a par with a family's socio-economic status (Popov, 2010).

To I.D. Frumin's mind, “the most potentially significant resource of socio-economic development is formed (can be formed) in the system of education” (Frumin, 2007, p. 32). The youth is a strategic potential of the country's development as the youth's way of thinking, mode of life and values shape the future. A significant chain in modernization of Russian education is school. In “Concept of modernization of Russian education till 2010” one of priority guidelines of educational policy is stated to be formation of the system of career-oriented education in senior grades of secondary school that facilitates many-sided intellectual and spiritual as well as practice-oriented development of students' individuality in case they are ready to make a choice and design their life and career on their own. The following theoretical ideas were assumed as a basis for the Concept of career-oriented education: idea of self-determination on basis of educational focus on a personality, idea of an individual-oriented education, idea of varied education, idea of

open education (Conception of career-oriented..., 2002).

Career-oriented education is regarded as a complex means of quality improvement, effectiveness and accessibility of general education which makes it possible to take students' interests, biases, abilities into account to a greater extent, to create the opportunities for directing senior students' education towards their professional interests and intentions in respect to continuation of their education due to changes in structure, content, organization of educational process and differentiation.

This is the ideology of modernization of education and career-oriented education in particular.

The ideas of career-oriented education in our country have been formed since 2003. It means in-depth mastering of some subjects, differentiation of education in accordance with students' abilities, possibilities of individual educational programmes design by students themselves. Simultaneously with introduction of career-oriented education they carry out the monitoring of conditions at senior secondary schools and namely: where and what circumstances are provided for senior students, what new opportunities for designing education they get as a result of career-oriented education introduction. Competences, quality of school-leavers, academic results, etc. are also monitored (S.S. Kravtsov, I.S. Sergeev, S.G. Vershlovskiy, M.D. Matyushkina, A. Levinson, E.A. Podgornaya, O.A. Reshetnikova, V.V. Verzhbitskiy and others). At the same time there are extremely few researches on getting students' feedback on the questions if a career-oriented school is a place where a student learns to make a choice of his/her course of life, if the problems of self-determination concerning a course of life and career are solved by students, if teachers are involved and participate in this process, if there

are differences in solving problems of students' self-determination because of different places of their residence (a city, a village) and if a place of a senior student's residence is a crucial condition for his/her self-determination.

Message of the research

The basis for the present research is the research done within the frame of the Project of career-oriented education models approbation in Krasnoyarskiy Krai (2008). 4174 students of grades 9 and 11, who are residents of cities and villages of Krasnoyarskiy Krai, were involved in it. Questionnaire poll was chosen as a method of the research. The questionnaire-form included questions of both types: open and closed. The students were asked to define career-oriented education the way they understand it, to single out weak and strong aspects of career-oriented education, to dwell upon the issue how school can influence a choice of their career (professional self-determination), etc.

As it has been mentioned above, the idea of career-oriented education is that a student must be provided with the conditions for realization of his/her educational demands and needs in accordance with his/her professional interests and intentions in respect to continuation of education. This means that education of one student can differ from education of another student as it must work with inner self-determination of every student, with designing a course of life by a student himself/herself. Following K.A. Abul'khanova-Slavskaya's, M.R. Ginzburg's, I.S. Kon's, A.N. Leont'ev's, S.L. Rubinshtein's V.F. Safin's and others' points of view, by self-determination we mean a complex socio-psychological process requiring a certain level of a personality's development, responsibility, ability to make a choice. Self-determination is a person's understanding of himself/herself, his/her own future which implies a place in a human society,

professional environment, a person's purpose in life. A human plans his/her future and makes it real consciously and on his own. Relying upon I.S. Kon's, E.I. Golovakh's, I.V. Dubrovina's, D.V. Ol'shanskiy's works, we consider that it's necessary to discuss a person's readiness to self-determination in his/her early youth. An adult's help is needed for a successful realization of this process (T.M. Kovaleva, S.N. Chistyakova).

Thus, what must a ninth grader expect moving to senior secondary school?

1) Change of academic space. The content of invariant part of subjects is the same for all the students. Variations take the form of a choice of the level of mastering a subject (basic, core), choice of elective courses, optional classes and other types of classes.

2) Opportunity to enter a new space – a space of academic research. It is the space where a student makes him/herself familiar with a certain new activity. He learns to see and elicit a problem, discuss and analyze it, do a research, describe and present the results. The ability to carry out a research, discover new knowledge is one of general competences of a modern human being. The space of academic research ensures individualization of education as a student does his work and is responsible for it. From a pedagogical point of view, this activity makes it possible to come out of a translation mode and create the conditions for getting knowledge proper new for a student, to communicate with a teacher in a different (partnership) style though on a certain subject field.

3) Opportunity of independent initiative and socially responsible activity in the space of extracurricular activity and co-administration.

4) A different type of relationship with adults / teachers – not a didactical and lecturing but co-operational in respect to his/her own education. A teacher / adult helps a student in the latter's self-determination regarding, firstly, his

educational future and, secondly, his professional future. This adult sets that "necessary pedagogical focus which ensures coordination of all varied structures aiming at helping a student in his conscious choice, on the one hand, and holds the problems and difficulties of the process of self-determination, self-education that spring up during pre-career-oriented preparation and career-oriented education, creates the conditions for real individualization of educational process, on the other hand" (Kovaleva, 2007).

We expect that this should be a result of the Concept of career-oriented school implementation. An important issue for us is what we actually face. Is career-oriented school a place where students are prepared for self-determination and learn to chose a course of their life and plan this life here and now to this or that extent? Does a senior student's place of residence (a city, a village) influence his/her perception of senior secondary school?

The present research is an attempt to answer the questions put forward.

Some results

While analyzing the respondents' answers, we got many interesting data. As it is impossible to dwell upon all of them and discuss them in one we suggest focusing upon the most interesting, to our mind, part of the research – 'geographical' data development – which embraces the differences between senior students living in different places.

The respondents' answers in which the students defined career-oriented school were divided into several groups (Fig. 1, 2).

The first group is presented by the students who somehow distinguish goals of career-oriented education. At that the answers of this group characterize different goals: "necessary to be trained and enter a higher education institution", "to make sure which career to take up", "to

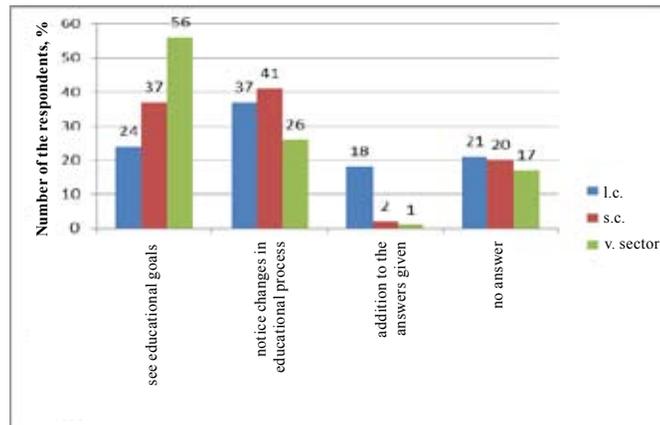


Fig. 1. Views on career-oriented education (Grade 9)

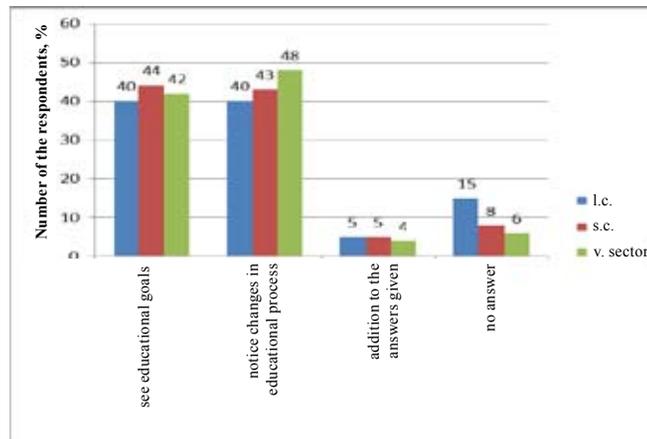


Fig. 2. Views on career-oriented education (Grade 11)

understand what I want”, etc. As for the answers in which self-determination is mentioned, they don’t divulge possible ways of solving this task. It is not clear how and on whose account it can and must be solved. Distribution of the respondents’ answers is graphically presented in Fig. 3, 4.

The second group is represented by the respondents who, while defining career-oriented education, single out only the changes in the process of education at senior secondary school. Their answers are connected with the ideas of the possibility to choose ‘necessary’ subjects at senior secondary school and reject ‘unnecessary’ ones without mentioning the aims of such a

choice. The answers of this group of the students don’t make it clear what goal they plan to achieve choosing the subjects, and what reasons they will take into account while choosing one subjects and rejecting the other ones.

The third group of the respondents considers career-oriented education to be supplementary education that exceeds the limits of traditional education frame. In other words, career-oriented education changes nothing in educational process. It is fixed up in students’ spare time and space.

There is also a group of students who failed to answer this question. It might mean that this group can’t single out distinctive characteristics

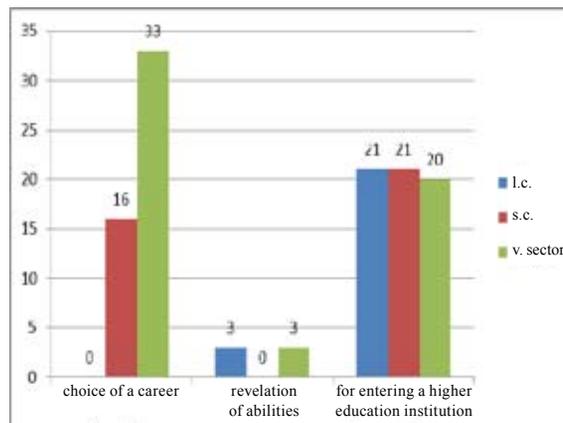


Fig. 3. Objectives of career-oriented education (Grade 9), % (rate of the answers about objectives)

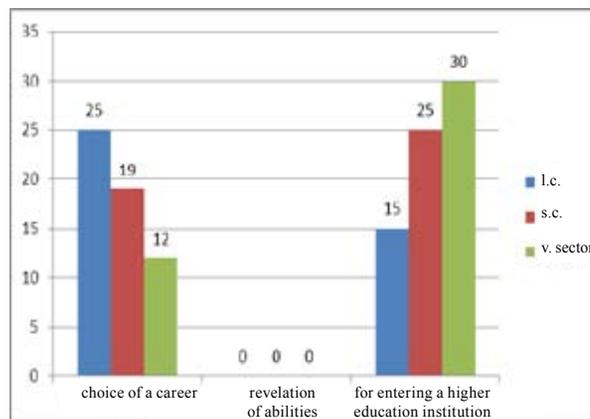


Fig. 4. Objectives of career-oriented education (Grade 11), % (rate of the answers about objectives)

of career-oriented education from the education they have acquired before. Thus, this case might mean a formal implementation of pre-career education or its absence at all.

The students' views on career-oriented education that were brought to light as a result of such analysis serve as the evidence of the fact that the students notice changes in school education (choice of subjects). As a matter of fact they mention two results of career-oriented education such as career self-determination (and self-determination in general) and entering a higher education institution. New activities, opportunities of own independent activity at

senior secondary school were not found in the respondents' answers. In other words, we have registered a very narrow and one-sided view on career-oriented education of both groups of the respondents: ninth graders and eleventh graders.

Comparing the dynamics of the singled-out groups of students regarding their definitions of career-oriented school, we have found out that there are considerable differences between the students of grade 9 and those of grade 11, living in different places. We divided all populated areas into the following types – a large city, a small city, a village sector (on the diagrams they are

marked with corresponding letters “l.c.”, “s.c.”, “v. sector”).

The students of grade 9, being residents of different places, differ greatly in their answers. But by grade 11 the differences in the answers of the students, living in different places, are reduced.

The students of grade 9 who live in villages think of career-oriented education more intelligently than the ninth graders who live in other places (Fig. 1, 2). 56% of the students of grade 9 who live in villages describe career-oriented education through its goals. As for ninth graders from small cities, 37% of them expressed the same ideas. The rate of such students from large cities is 24%. But urban students describe career-oriented education mostly as changes in educational process. 41% of ninth graders from small cities and 37% of ninth graders from large cities expressed this opinion. As for ninth graders from village sectors, only 26% mentioned this.

It is the students of grade 9 from large cities who increased the rate of the respondents considering career-oriented education to be supplementary to basic one. 18% of such answers were given by ninth graders from large cities while only 3% of ninth graders from small cities and village sectors answered so. It might be possibly explained by the situation of accessibility of higher education institutions' preparatory courses for urban students.

The rate of urban students who failed to answer the question about career-oriented education is a bit higher than that of village students.

By grade 11 the situation is changing. In comparison with grade 9 the rate of urban students who have mentioned the goals of career-oriented education is higher. The number of village students' answers about forms and changes in educational process in the course of career-oriented education become more numerous. The

students of grade 11 prevail among those who failed to define career-oriented education (in large cities they are 15%, in small cities – 8%, in village sectors – 6%).

A more intent analysis of the respondents' views on goals of career-oriented education enables to find out the differences in the answers caused by the place of the students' residence. The data are presented in Fig. 3, 4. The predominant goal for village ninth graders is choice of a career (33%). As for urban ninth graders, only small cities residents (16%) express this idea. For urban students career-oriented education is predominantly connected with entering a higher education institution (21 % of the respondents).

By grade 11 the situation is changing: 25% of the students from large cities mention the choice of a career among the objectives of career-oriented education while 30% of village students consider entering a higher education institution to be the objective of career-oriented education. As the diagrams show the students from small cities occupy the middle position.

Basing upon the data, we can assert that the students from large cities start solving the task of self-determination regarding their future career only in grade 11. A sort of delay in the process of becoming adults is peculiar for urban students. This might mean some urban students' infantilism in respect of self-determination tasks solution. For urban students entering a higher education institution turns out to be not as crucial in life as it is for village students who regard the task of entering a higher education institution to be a very important decision that greatly determines their future life. Entering a higher education institution means leaving for a city, living on their own, as a rule, and a lot of other things caused by all this.

At the same time, we consider it important that the students' views on career-oriented education indicate the fact that the students notice

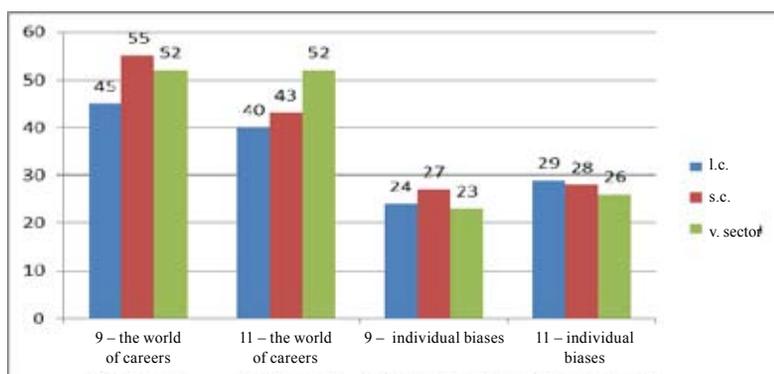


Fig. 5. Influence of the school on career choice in the 9th and 11 th school years, %

changes in educational sphere (choice of subjects). They also indicate two results of career-oriented education – career self-determination (and self-determination in general) and entering a higher education institution. Neither new activities nor new opportunities for the students' own independent activity at senior secondary school have been found out in the respondents' answers. In other words, we have registered that both ninth graders and eleventh graders have a very narrow and one-sided idea of career-oriented education.

One more interesting situation is worth being discussed. Irrespective of the ninth graders' place of residence their need for knowledge of modern careers is rather great (Fig. 5). 45-55% of ninth graders mention it. Approximately the same number of eleventh graders (40-52%) mention it as well regardless of place of residence. It should be noted that there is some reduction of this rate by grade 11 when urban students are considered: the reduction for the students from large cities is from 45% in grade 9 to 40% in grade 11; the reduction for the students from small cities is from 55% in grade 9 to 43% in grade 11. As for the rate of this need for village students, it doesn't reduce from grade 9 to grade 11 and remain 52%. It means that issues of getting acquainted with the world of careers are urgent and called-for in the course of senior school.

A career that reveals individual biases is vital for all the students irrespective of their age and place of residence. Such a career makes it possible for a young person to understand his/her individual features, possibilities and drawbacks. It leads to the necessity of career counseling concerning students' individual features and abilities for the choice of future career.

Conclusion and setting tasks for traditional school

The research has resulted in the following conclusions:

1. Urban students start solving the tasks of career-oriented self-determination later than village ones;
2. The students of both grades (grade 9 and grade 11) have a very narrow and one-sided idea of career-oriented education and single out only two results of such education, and namely: career self-determination and entering a higher education institution;
3. Acuteness of career-oriented self-determination issue doesn't reduce from grade 9 to grade 11.

We suggest the following interpretation of these conclusions. The basis of the Conception of career-oriented education is constituted by the ideas of self-determination, based on

educational focus on a personality, personality-oriented education, varied education design, open education. This must result in a many-sided development of students with due regard for their readiness to design and make a choice of life and career trajectory on their own. It is possible if an educational space is represented and full of opportunities for various activities and practices. These must be spaces of academic research, social practices and kinds of activity. But the main thing here is that an educational space must be designed according to a different logic which presupposes transition from the subject value to the activity value. This will lead to a different result of education, that is not a correctly done test but, for example, a description of a senior student's own activity (productive, organizational, etc). It will make it possible to speak about the formation of some competences or about equipping senior students with the resources necessary to solve the task of life self-determination.

Dwelling upon the senior students' education, it's impossible to limit it to school only. A personality is educated not only in class. A much wider context is involved here – the context of place of residence, the context of the world where a student chooses a sphere of his future career, etc. The whole macro-situational environment around a student influences the process of his/her education. The whole environment (enterprises in a senior student's place of residence, people who work in this territory) is regarded as resources in the process of self-determination.

The context is understood as “all the layers of the reality that all together form the meaning of what is going on” (Frumin, 1999, 36, p. 15). We suggest singling out the following contexts: in-school, out-school and national / international.

In-school context. This context implies everything that is established and adjusted at school for senior students. Unfortunately, even the best qualitatively organized work inside a

single school will not provide senior students with quality education without the two contexts described below.

Out-school context. This context is determined by the place of a school and its environment that is characteristic to a certain village / region / city. The activities of enterprises and people around a school are very important. Any business owner, living nearby and making daily life environment comfortable for himself and the others, might serve an example. That's why, notwithstanding the place we live in, it's necessary to look around and positively interpret surrounding environment. Senior students' new projects and schemes should be designed in this context. The context is easier to be coped with in a city as there are more opportunities there. But a region is no less perspective for education.

National / international context. This context is a common space for a human's activity. Potentially it is any student's future. This context can and must be used via modern informational television channels and Internet.

A teacher's role is vital both in the work with the contexts and in the work of tracking through them. It's important for teachers to understand the social world around. They shouldn't merely be aware of what is going on and where it is going on but they should be able to single out / see the tendencies of social life, perceive the world as extra opportunities for their own development and their own vital tasks solution. In other words, they should consider the international context as a space of their opportunities and teach within this context at school.

So, discussing modern education we'd like to emphasize the importance of being able to see both the nearest world around and the international context where one can live and develop.

Thus, a senior career-oriented secondary school is not only choice of subjects and curricular programmes. It is also a school's educational

space including everything that is going on there in respect of education. It is a city's, a village's, a region's, a country's, the world's resources that might be used by senior students to solve the tasks of their educational, vocational and vital determination as well.

We find it important to emphasize an activity-based context of a career-oriented education which as it is clear from the research data is not distinguished and taken into consideration at school. One of the English words for the Russian "professiya" is "occupation", the phonetic image of which activates the meaning of 'the action, state, or period of occupying or being occupied by military force' in Russian linguistic mind. In the context of our discussion it means that being involved in this or that career space a human 'occupies' it that is uses it for his / her activity, mobilizes resources in it, makes this space interesting for people, carries out some useful activity. This is what should be shown to the students.

Thus, we consider that in modern world it would be more correct to concentrate not on the students' career counseling (that is their future career), but on the activity based counseling and namely: What would they prefer to do in their future life? What career would they like to have? What is the world of careers in modern world? This world is activity based. It is the world of competences which are difficult and sometimes even impossible to acquire while getting education at (inside) an educational institution. Nowadays, designing the students' career counseling it might be necessary to focus upon the world of activity directions but not upon the world of careers. According to the results of PISA international research, one of the main difficulties for modern senior students is their inability to transform subject knowledge into competences they need for this or that activity. They regard their education as a set of subjects

but not as competences mastered. But the time requirement is that young people while learning at school could speak not only about what they learnt in the course of their education but about what they can do as a result of it.

Discussing educational space of a senior career-oriented secondary school and its activity based context, it is undoubtedly important to answer such questions as how the work at these resources is organized, how the process of the students' choice of curricula, courses, projects, practices, activities, resources, etc. is organized, how the reflection of this choice is organized, how the objective of one's own choice regarding the goals, put by him/herself, is set for the students, how these goals are discussed and whether they are discussed at all, etc. – how is the work at guiding the students' self-determination process is organized in general. At this modality of discussion of education at senior secondary school in our country, availability of special "places" for discussions between a student and a teacher about the former's own life is vital.

All the mentioned above proves the possibility to formulate the objectives of career-oriented education for the nearest future. At present it is urgent to develop an educational field of senior secondary school and to organise its work, and namely:

1. Providing each school with the opportunities for students' choice of the level of mastering curricula, courses, practices, projects and other kinds of senior students' activity.
2. Development of the system of pedagogical guidance of students' self-determination process – providing circumstances for launch and realization of students' reflection about their educational way in the context of self-determination in life.
3. Expansion of the borders of a career-oriented school's educational opportunities due to inclusion of a city's/village's, a region's, a country's,

the world's resources in its space. Introduction and development of the mechanisms that make it possible for village students to compensate the impossibility of real communication with the representatives of many modern careers (for instance, to broaden an informational space through open sources of getting information, excursions, Internet, video-films, etc.)

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Актуальные задачи современной старшей школы

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С 2003 года у нас в стране оформляются идеи профильного обучения, и параллельно ведется мониторинг условий и возможностей, которые создаются в школах для образования старшеклассников.

Данная работа является попыткой получения обратной связи от самих школьников, ответа на следующие вопросы - является ли для школьника профильная школа местом обучения выбору жизненного пути, решаются ли школьниками задачи самоопределения относительно своего жизненного и профессионального будущего?

Основой для работы явилось исследование, проведенное в рамках Проекта апробации моделей профильного обучения в Красноярском крае (2008г). В исследовании приняли участие 4174 учащихся 9 и 11 классов, проживающих в городах и селах Красноярского края. В качестве метода исследования использовалось анкетирование. В анкете применялись вопросы открытого и закрытого типа. Школьникам было предложено ответить на вопросы о том, что они понимают под профильным обучением, какие сильные и слабые стороны профильного обучения могут выделить, как школа может влиять на их выбор профессии (профессиональное самоопределение) и др.

Проведенное исследование позволяет нам сделать следующие выводы:

- 1) городские школьники, в отличие от сельских, позже приступают к решению задачи профессионального самоопределения;*
- 2) учащиеся, как девятого, так и одиннадцатого классов, имеют очень узкое и однобокое представление о профильном обучении – выделяют два результата профильного обучения - профессиональное самоопределение и поступление в вуз;*
- 3) острота вопроса профессионального самоопределения не спадает от девятого к одиннадцатому классу.*

Это означает, что, говоря об образовании старшеклассников, нельзя ограничиваться только изменениями в учебных планах - введением профилей, выбором уровня изучения предмета

(базовый, профильный), элективных курсов. Вся среда, окружающая школьника, влияет на процесс его самоопределения – может как способствовать этому процессу, так и затруднять его.

В связи со сказанным выше мы можем сформулировать задачи реализации профильного обучения на современном этапе.

1. Создание возможностей в каждой школе для выбора учащимися уровня изучения предметных программ, курсов, практик, проектов и др. видов деятельности старшеклассников.

2. Построение системы педагогического сопровождения процесса самоопределения учащихся - создание условий для запуска и осуществления рефлексии старшеклассниками своего образовательного пути в контексте жизненного самоопределения.

3. Расширение границ образовательных возможностей профильной школы за счет включения в это пространство ресурсов города/села, региона, страны, мира.

Ключевые слова: старшая школа, профильная школа, цели образования, самоопределение старшеклассника, профориентационная работа в школе.
