

# **LESSON-STUDIES FOR TRAINING AND RETRAINING TEACHERS IN RUSSIA**

## **(Theses for The Lecture)**

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### **Common**

This material is devoted to Open Lessons in Russia for goals of teachers training. Open Lessons (OL) are the usual studying form when students begin their work at schools as young teachers. One can say that OL play the same role in Russia as LS do in Thailand, Japan and other economies joined to the project. But the understanding of OL is slightly wider, than LS.

Russian school practises OL for tens of years using them for different purposes

- (a) Training young teachers;
- (b) Exchange of experiences between teachers;
- (c) As educational tools for continuous teachers' education programs;
- (d) As part of teacher's certification program (every five years);
- (e) Presentation of new education technologies, editions, or methods.

### **Open Lessons' Types (by Authority and Goals)**

**1. Each school (in cities or in rural districts) organizes OL for its teachers.** In the case methodologists pursue one of two objects: Lesson Study for inexperienced teachers or Open Lesson as some sort of the control over teacher's professional work (let us call it as Control Lesson or CL shortly).

Usually a teacher carries out his OL once in year or less. Thus every school has about three-five OL for every subject its own teachers.

Often the OL are timed to The Subject Week in the school. This practice provides current methodological work and skill increasing. The OL type (Study or Control) depends on the goal, skill, position of the author.

Every teacher must give the OL attended by authorized person for repeat attestation one time in five year.

When a teacher gives an OL he consolidates all his pedagogical skills with fantasy to create something interesting and remarkable. Here we see not only positive qualities but some shortcomings because of Control Lesson having been transformed into a sort of play the teacher ventures to loss an important part – the fea-

tures of regular lesson as an element of the educational system. Very often methodologists or tutors have been attracted with colored side of the Open Lesson only.

The same danger lies in wait for an author of Lesson Study. Having been keen on the unusual or game-like forms students forget about the mainstream of teaching and learning. Thus one can get an interesting and bright show instead of the study tool.

**2. Municipal or regional methodological centers** provide the special program for teachers' preparation. OL (mainly LS) are included into these programs as important and most effective part.

Usually accredited schools are used with their rooms and students for OL. In this case the goals are: preparing students for work in school or retraining licensed teachers. When OL are prepared by professionals we get less problems because a professional fills OL with proper content the same time remembering about demonstrative side of the matter.

**3. Experimental schools.** A large number of schools in Russia are involved in a pilot projects, developing a methodological theme or new educational technology. Usually these investigations are going under control of regional educational authorities such as Regional Ministries or Educational Departments. Every experimental school provides OL as a part of the methodological work in accordance with the school achievements. Here we pursue another purpose – to introduce new methods into common school practice and make “new lessons models”. Undoubtedly these pilot OLs we can consider as LS in its main meaning.

**4. Schools involved into student-training programs** give the tutors (highly qualified teachers having contract with pedagogical universities) for the student groups. OL (both the types) have being in use to train students and manage their professional growth

**5. Publishing houses often carry out special seminars in order to inform pedagogical community about new educational editions.** Recent years we observe the steady process of transforming these seminars into series of shows and presentations. Publishers had found that OL is the best way to demonstrate new workbooks 'in operation'. So they involve methodologists and tuition specialists into the work to approve and present new educational products.

### **Open Lessons Forms (by Periodicity and Audience Size)**

**1. Usually an OL goes through in the standard classroom** (left-windowed room with 54 m of area). So an OL can accept only 5 – 10 attendees (students or teachers). We have very strict laws about school hygiene and strong school sanitary inspection. So no one can carry out an OL in unadapted premises such as sport-hall in presence of lot of listeners.

**2. Sometimes OL are spent in rented big halls.** Usually – for some extraordinary cases such as a pedagogical forum etc. In this case the number of invited attendees may reach tens or hundreds (as many as the room allows). Such OLs could not be systematic, because regular lessons out of a special room are strictly prohibited.

**3. Distant form.** Recent years Open Lessons in form of video record get more and more widely-spread. Having been placed in Internet the LS and comments are available to all users.

### **Open Lessons on Teachers' Forums and Conferences**

OL have turned into the main feature of teachers' forums. The narrow-thematic conferences and meetings are usually held by experimental schools and education publishers, institutes of retraining and municipal educational centers. But regular pedagogical forums have an especial place in Russian teachers studying system. Brightest example – forum called “School Subject Marathon” having been carried out yearly by Publishing House of “1st September” gazette with co-founders: Moscow Government Educational Department and Moscow Institute of Open Education. This forum is open and free for visit for any teacher from any corner of the Russia. Usually the Marathon is held in April (a day – a subject) in Moscow Professional Lyceum # 1535. This Lyceum represents the example of the experimental school and its union with methodological centers, publishers and the Moscow Government.

The best teachers prepare their Lesson Study for the Marathon to show for all the teachers' community.

Besides the Marathon there are many similar forums held by regional or interregional pedagogical unions.

Such forums give the strong positive impact to school methodological science and enrich teachers' training tradition in Russia.

### **Before and After**

In preparation process of an OL should be involved both methodologists, and schoolboys. The author of a lesson is mistaken, if thinks that pupils during a lesson will act in a correct way so that the lesson has not be broken. At first it is necessary to learn natural reaction of students to actions of the teacher. Only thus it is possible to plan an active lesson entirely, without being afraid of unexpectedness. On the other hand, the OL should not be the rehearsed performance – that's not as interesting as we want it to be. Therefore the OL should be prepared together with all system of previous and inheriting lessons.

The skilled teacher, preparing for an OL, means two-three variants of succession of events at a lesson and he is ready to them.

But the main thing is the OL analysis. The correct analysis goes in the presence of the audience for which the lesson is intended. The author tells about the purposes of a OL and in what degree they are implemented. Especially important for the LS when after the discussion all the attendees are offered to model their own versions of the LS for the same content. The serious difference in approaches should be revealed. It is almost impossible to repeat another's lesson with success. Each lesson as a work of art bears in itself the seal of the author's individuality.

If the critical analysis of LS is useful, the critical analysis of control lessons is necessary. Usually such analysis is carried out by the tutor of the students' group during school training.

For licensed teachers the authorized methodologist plays the same role.

### **Publication of the OL Materials**

In Russia the most difficult part of teachers' vocational training programs is a distribution of the information across all the professional community taking into account huge territories. In Moscow and Petersburg this problem has been satisfactorily solved all years. But connections between different parts of the country were weak. The only way was used – books for teachers.

The problem has become aggravated after Soviet Union has been crushed. The common educational space has been crushed the same time. The number of books with OL-techniques has not decreased. On the contrary – it has repeatedly increased due to easy publishing in computerized era and minimizing government supervising. But in mass the quality of the editions has fallen.

The Internet has come to the rescue. Now Russian Internet contains thousands of free OL descriptions for all purposes. The regional methodological centers like MIOE support and manage the internet publications. Let us mention one of them "Open Lesson – Pedagogical Ideas Festival" ([festival.1september.ru](http://festival.1september.ru)) devoted to pedagogical designs, mainly to the OL technologies.

### **Summarize**

An OL is important but not the unique and not the main form of teachers' education and vocational training. The main OL features are:

Presentation;

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It is impossible to neglect other methods because at all advantages the LS is a method of external educational influence. Moreover, by means of an OL it is possible to show only interaction of the teacher and the student. At the same time all the unassisted learning activity of the student (homework, developing skills etc.) remains out of this form. And, at last, OL has a little exaggerated theatricality mentioned above. These natural shortcomings of the OL-method lead us to a conclusion that along with OL in teachers' training the methodical theory should occupy a worthy place.

Saying briefly, an OL being the purely practical method should be combined with other methods harmoniously and lean against a theoretical basis, just as any technology does