

## ***PLANNING A DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL***

Groups of high school students from different regions of Russia were participating in a Eureka Conference at Avante Garde University. In a workshop which was a follow-up from a previous conference, the students were tasked with designing a democratic school. Although the subject matter generated a lot of brainstorming and debate, that approach was clearly not taking the students to a finished product. They seemed to have no sense of direction or focus.

*We were asked to assist in guiding the students to complete the assigned task. In so doing, we used the TOC process tool to achieve an Ambitious Target-- in this case, "A democratic school."*

In TOC, we don't start with solutions. First we make sure that we agree on and really understand the problem we are trying to solve. Therefore, we posed a question to the students to focus their thinking and to clarify the problem: "What problems--obstacles-- will you encounter if you try to implement democracy at school?" We divided the students into two groups, each of which developed a list of obstacles to the target. Next, we asked them to think of what would overcome each of the identified obstacles. These "Intermediate Objectives" were then listed next to the obstacles as 'solutions.'

<b>DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL-GROUP ONE</b>	
<b><i>Obstacles</i></b>	<b><i>Intermediate Objectives</i></b>
1. Many pupils are passive.	1. A lot of pupils are active.
2. Misunderstandings between teacher and pupil.	2. Teachers understand the pupils.
3. The basic law of the school is that the teacher is always right.	3. The teachers are sometimes mistaken.
4. Teachers do not take seriously the idea of student democracy.	4. Teachers have a serious attitude to children's democracy.
5. Local administration does not make it law to have children's constitution.	5. Constitution is a law for all people.
6. Students do not know their principle rights.	6. Knowing your principle rights.
7. Students are dependent on teachers.	7. Students are independent of teachers.
8. L.A. not interested in having democratic schools and adopting constitution.	8. Agreement with administration.
9. Pupils are indifferent.	9. Students become interested in democracy.
10. Pupils are too busy to be involved in democratic activity.	10. Work without problems
11. Parents often want their children to go to school and study nothing else.	11. Understanding of parents.
11. Lack of resources to organize different projects.	11. Enough materials.
12. We are disorganized.	12. Organisation.
13. Our actions do not have direction.	13. To be conscious of actions.
14. Students have many different points of view.	14. Unity of points of view.

The students then sequenced this list of Intermediate Objectives to give them a 'map' of steps. They were to take this plan back to their schools to develop a constitution. What's noteworthy is the effect of the TOC process to enable them to work with such focus, collaboration and organized results. Therefore, they were able to complete their "strategic" plans within 2 hours. Teachers attending other workshops stopped by to see the students work and became so engrossed in the process we were using that many of them stayed in our session as observers. We were especially pleased to receive the following letter from the Ministry of Education.



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**To whom it may concern**

At the recent Eureka Avant Garde conference held in Moscow during April, over 300 teachers and 50 advanced students had the opportunity to learn about TACT Galina Dolya and David Higgins did a presentation workshop to the teachers and worked with the students using the materials

Many teachers from all parts of the Russian Federation were so impressed with the programme and with the work that the students produced that they wish for the opportunity to train to use the materials

The Minister of Education was present at the conference and wishes to support the introduction of the programme into the regions. It encourages the regions to bring the training to their cities and has asked Eureka to act as an agent in this respect

Minister of Education

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'V. Filippov', written over a horizontal line.

V. Filippov