Children's and Youth Amateur Press in the Context of Media Education

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Abstract

This article focuses on issues of independent children's and youth press, represented by school newspapers.

The theoretical and methodological foundation of the proposed research consists of provisions reflecting an interdisciplinary approach that combines ideas from media pedagogy, juvenile journalism, developmental psychology, as well as concepts of practice-oriented education.

The research shows that the most effective models for developing amateur journalism are those based on principles of participation, trust, initiative support, and partnership between children and adults.

The obtained data allowed the formulation of several important conclusions that are significant both for educators and mentors working with young authors, and for the professional community of journalists and media educators.

Practical experience gained in newspaper editorial work shows that training young journalists requires a balance between adherence to professional standards and creating conditions for creative freedom. The problem of adult dominance in the editing and layout process requires pedagogical reflection and correction. The development of methodological recommendations proposed in this study was an attempt to overcome this contradiction through the implementation of a flexible class structure based on activity-based, person-centered, and project-based approaches. Special attention in the recommendations is given to the class format: the combination of theoretical block, practical work, game element, and reflection stage ensures engagement, forms emotional and intellectual motivation, and contributes to the development of meta-subject competencies. It is this approach, in our view, that allows for the most effective integration of educational goals with adolescents' need for self-expression and social activity.

Keywords: media education, media pedagogy, juvenile journalism, school newspaper, child psychology, creativity, meta-subject competencies.

1. Introduction

The traditional understanding of media literacy in the educational context as a certain sum of knowledge, skills, and abilities that schoolchildren should master is currently being fundamentally reconsidered. Modern approaches contribute not only to the study of journalistic skills but also to the formation of a stable civic position, social involvement, and the ability to critically comprehend media reality. It is particularly important to emphasize that theoretical analysis confirms that working on a school newspaper is a crucial stage in the formation of media literacy. Scientists rightfully assert that adolescents have become the most active users of new forms of creativity

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(Fedorov, 2014), which are most successful in the form of self-presentation (from external style to way of thinking). Adolescents can transfer their experience of self-presentation in social networks to the pages of school newspapers, and the school newspaper itself can be distributed through social networks.

The scholars' viewpoint on the necessity of transforming traditional approaches to career guidance is of interest, since, in their opinion, traditional approaches to career guidance based on testing and collecting information about various professions often prove insufficiently effective due to information overload and fragmentation. The school newspaper is ideally suited as a foundation for forming competencies necessary for the young generation to live in an information society: critical thinking, ability to evaluate information sources, recognize manipulations and fakes, culture of personal information security, and information culture in general. It forms and develops understanding of the specifics of professions related to mass media. From school newspaper to an open media school model is a promising vector determining the development of mass media education.

The media educational and pedagogical potential of amateur press lies not only in developing students' cognitive and communicative abilities but also in forming their social maturity, media competence, self-understanding, and aspiration for socially significant activities, making it an important resource in the socialization process of children and adolescents. Analysis of the media educational and pedagogical potential of amateur press is of key importance for our article, as it allows us to conclude that successful journalism education for children should be built not on transmitting formal knowledge but on creating conditions for active participation in real media production processes. Understanding these mechanisms enables the development of methodological recommendations that consider not only journalistic standards but also age-specific characteristics, children's need for independence and recognition, and their striving for self-realization.

2. Materials and methods

Significant influence on the conceptual provisions of the research was exerted by: activity theory (L.S. Vygotsky, A.N. Leontiev); ecological model of personality development (U. Bronfenbrenner); concept of psychosocial identity (E. Erikson); theory of cognitive development (J. Piaget); sociocultural approach to learning (B. Rogoff, L.S. Vygotsky); media educational approaches (A.V. Fedorov, R. Hobbs, S. Kotilainen); theory of participatory pedagogy in youth media practices. The methodological foundation also included research in the field of media pedagogy (D.I. Kosolapova, N.N. Morozova), which emphasizes the importance of practice as a form of mastering the media environment and developing critical thinking.

Amateur children's and youth press represents not only a means of creative self-expression but also a unique educational tool that helps form important personal and social qualities. The study of the pedagogical potential of this activity is necessary for understanding how children's participation in creating media products contributes to their development, as well as for developing effective methods of teaching young journalists. This phenomenon needs to be understood in the context of psychological and pedagogical concepts of Uri Bronfenbrenner, Erik Erikson, Sigmund Freud, Jean Piaget, Barbara Rogoff, and Lev Vygotsky.

According to U. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development, personality is formed under the influence of interacting levels of the environment (micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems). Amateur press forms a unique microsystem – an editorial community where adolescents learn social interactions, norms of cooperation, and responsible attitude toward collective work. Through participation in creating school publications, adolescents connect themselves with a broader social context (school, society), which contributes to the development of their social competence.

Erikson emphasized the identity crisis characteristic of adolescence. An adolescent constantly faces questions: Who is he/she and who will he/she become? Is he/she a child or an adult? How do his/her ethnic, racial background, and religion influence people's attitude toward him/her? What will be his/her true authenticity, true identity as an adult person? Such questions often cause adolescents painful concern about what others think of them and what they themselves should think of themselves. Activity in the press allows adolescents to try on various social roles: journalist, editor, illustrator, proofreader. This is a process of active search and self-awareness in the social structure, strengthening the sense of identity and self-confidence (Haritonova, 2022; Savina, 2019).

Freud's psychoanalytic theory points to the importance of forming a strong ego in adolescence as a balance between instinctive desires and societal demands. Participation in creating school press content requires self-control, discipline, and social responsibility, which contributes to ego strengthening and the formation of a mature personal position.

Piaget's cognitive theory of development describes adolescence as a stage of formal operations when the ability for abstract thinking, hypothetical reasoning, and reflection is formed. When preparing materials for amateur press, adolescents learn to analyze complex social phenomena, argue their point of view, and form coherent textual constructions, which develops their cognitive abilities. B. Rogoff's theory of sociocultural development emphasizes the importance of joint activity in learning. The school newspaper editorial office acts as a "community of practice" where adolescents collectively master journalistic skills (Desyayev, 2022). Amateur press, being a project activity, actively involves adolescents in meaningful use of written speech, stimulates the development of reflection, logical thinking, planning, and behavior regulation (Fedorov, 2012; Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2015; Zajceva, 2022).

Furthermore, participation in amateur press is directly related to the development of media competence – this skill is one of the most important in the modern world. E.M. Talalaeva notes that it is necessary to develop in children's audiences skills of independent perception of mass media messages, encourage the creation of their own media texts, and work in school media contributes to the formation of a critical attitude toward information, development of skills for conscious consumption and distribution of media content (Talalaeva, 2009). It is also necessary to consider the age-related needs of adolescents, such as the desire for independence, recognition, and self-actualization.

Research by E.A. Savina confirms adolescents' need for support and approval from adults, while noting their desire for self-realization and manifestation of their own initiative (Savina et al, 2019). These needs can be satisfied through participation in editorial activities. It should be noted separately that amateur press contributes to the development of social giftedness. According to research by P.A. Osmanova, media educational practices, including amateur press, develop leadership qualities, communicative abilities, creativity, and understanding of socially significant values in adolescents (Osmanova et al, 2021). She notes that "creating mass media in schools is a way for youth to creatively interact with society, with their friends, family, and themselves".

Finally, as emphasized by E.O. Ermolova and M.B. Loginova, the most important factor in adolescents' personal growth is their desire to overcome difficulties and achieve success in socially significant activities (Ermolova, Loginova, 2024). Participation in amateur press requires constant overcoming of intellectual, organizational, and communicative complexities, which contributes to the formation of volitional qualities and self-respect.

P.B. Egas and R.M. Toasa rightfully note that today mixed reality education is one of the pillars supporting societal development. With the emergence of new technologies, teaching methodologies and methods are being modernized to improve student preparation (Egas, Toasa, 2025). Thus, schoolchildren in specialized newspaper production classes, adapting to new conditions, must master not only economics fundamentals, computer literacy, and foreign languages, but also communication and social media interaction skills. Analyzing responses from college student respondents, researchers D. Odoom, L. Agyepong, and C. Dick-Sagoe identified high levels of social media usage for information sharing, entertainment, education, interpersonal communication, and social connections (Odoom et al, 2025). The Internet provides millions of schoolchildren with access to vast arrays of information with just a few clicks. However, it also facilitates the dissemination of information that children and adolescents find difficult to comprehend without specialized preparation. In the 20th century, many countries actualized issues of adolescent sexual education and launched the implementation of specialized educational programs in the general education system. Social networks play an important role here, as they can serve as tools for creating online communities and raising awareness about gender issues to protect against internet pornography and cybersexting (Ma et al, 2025).

School newspapers have no place for destructive information or news that might cause feelings of anxiety, stress, and fear in schoolchildren. Research shows that exposure to such information can have serious consequences, including deviant behavioral changes (Kumar et al, 2024). When working on school newspaper production, it is crucial to teach students to differentiate between negative, destructive, and positive information in collected materials. Newspapers in education systems provide significant effects, emphasize Chinese scholars (Cai, 2023).

School newspaper themes related to bullying contexts can be invaluable. Various school newspaper materials can be considered within the framework of preventive measures for strengthening student school adaptation depending on their cultural background and media literacy level. In research by American media psychologists using mediation models, the role of perceived factors related to school context (school connection, peer acceptance) and cyberbullying participation was studied (Touloupis et al, 2025).

3. Discussion

The creation of children's and youth amateur press represents an important direction in the formation of media competence, civic responsibility, and creative self-realization of the younger generation. International experience demonstrates different approaches to organizing children's and youth press, reflecting the characteristics of cultures, societies, educational contexts, and different countries.

As shown by research published in the "Journal of Children and Media", involving children in media production processes contributes to the development of critical thinking, collaboration skills, and social activity (Alper et al, 2023). Children's media projects become platforms for expressing opinions, discussing current problems, and forming identity.

In recent decades, children's participation in media production has become one of the most important directions within educational and social media projects. Within the framework of S. Kotilainen's research "Youth Media Participation: Global Perspectives" (Kotilainen, Kupiainen, 2020), the key direction in which children actively participate is identified: social projects where children participate in solving social problems, for example, through discussing issues of ecology, human rights, or digital technologies.

Thus, children's participation in media creation includes both active consumption and content creation, which contributes to the development of their social and creative skills.

One of the key features is the orientation toward participatory practices – involving children not only in content creation but also in decision-making regarding topics, formats, and methods of publication distribution. This allows young authors to feel their significance and responsibility for the final result. Of particular importance is creating conditions for free self-expression, which presupposes respectful attitude toward participants' ideas and views regardless of their age and social status.

Analysis conducted within the framework of the research "Youth-powered or Empowered: How Self-Determination Theory Can Help Us Better Understand Youth Media Dynamics with Adult Facilitators During the Pandemic" focuses on the balance of power between adult mentors and young content creators (Friesem et al., 2023). Researchers found that successful projects are based on principles of partnership rather than paternalism. Adults acting as organizers and consultants support children's initiatives, providing them with space for creativity and independent choice of topics. Models of interaction between adults and children in media projects can vary significantly, and the degree of children's involvement in the media content creation process depends on this.

Partnership Model (Germany, Finland) – adults mentor and support but do not interfere in the process of topic selection and content creation. Examples: Radijojo and Youth Voice Editorial Board. Mentorship Model (USA) – adults teach children professional skills, providing them with the opportunity to work according to real journalism standards. Example: Y-Press. Children's Initiative Model (Kenya) — adults minimally interfere, allowing children to make decisions independently. Example: Kibera TV.

An important characteristic of successful projects is respect for children's opinions, providing them with freedom of choice and opportunities for self-expression when creating media content. Such an approach not only contributes to the development of professional skills but also helps participants gain self-confidence and the ability to influence the surrounding world.

R. Hobbs and Jiwon Yoon in work "Creating Empowering Environments in Youth Media Organizations," analyzes what pedagogical strategies contribute to the effective organization of amateur media projects for youth (Hobbs, Yoon, 2008).

Key factors include:
– Creating an atmosphere of respect and trust;
– Ensuring access to necessary resources and training;
– Supporting participants' autonomy in the decision-making process;

– Encouraging critical thinking and creativity.

For successful implementation of projects with children's participation, a supportive environment is extremely important, including a number of pedagogical strategies:

– Equality in dialogue: children are perceived as full participants in media product production;

– Ethical and legal aspects: protecting children's rights in the media production process becomes a priority task;

– Reflection: discussing work results and analyzing created materials helps children realize the significance of media activity.

These principles allow building sustainable media projects where children and adolescents feel their value and get opportunities for full self-realization.

4. Results

International experience shows that organizing amateur press for children and youth not only involves acquiring journalistic skills but also creates conditions for developing media literacy, civic activity, and personal maturity. Successful practices combine principles of partnership, supporting participants' autonomy, and respecting their voices. In the context of global media coverage, such projects are particularly important as they contribute to forming a new generation of active and responsible citizens.

In further developing recommendations for organizing children's and youth press, we will rely on principles identified in successful international projects: supporting children's autonomy, creating an egalitarian creative environment, and learning through practical activities.

The newspaper "Rastopka" is a unique amateur publication produced within the framework of children's camp "Orange Planet" (St. Petersburg) sessions. For children, being mentioned in the newspaper or becoming its author or illustrator is a special form of recognition, a way of social identification within the camp community.

The main concept of "Rastopka" consists in comprehensive reflection of all aspects of camp life. The newspaper performs several functions simultaneously:

– Informational (covering camp events and session life);

– Pedagogical (developing children's written speech, logical and creative thinking, media competence);

– Social (strengthening connections between children, parents, educators, maintaining an atmosphere of unity and community).

"Rastopka" has become a kind of interlocutor and friend for camp participants, and its role goes beyond the usual school newspaper: each issue is a small encyclopedia of session life, filled with reflections, discoveries, joys, and children's experiences.

The publication's target audience is formed as follows:

– Primary audience: children aged 6 to 17 years—camp session participants interested in active, rich social and creative life.

– Secondary audience: parents of camp participants aged 30 to 45 years, as well as the camp's pedagogical staff (18-25 years).

– Geographic coverage: predominantly families from St. Petersburg and Leningrad Region.

The audience portrait includes active, socially engaged people oriented toward self-development, active recreation (tourism, rock climbing, rafting), and valuing traditions of the scout movement, including initiative, responsibility, collective activities in nature, and respectful attitude toward the surrounding world.

The newspaper's circulation varies from 60 copies per issue. From 4 to 11 issues are published per year, each available in both print and electronic versions on the camp's official VKontakte page.

Thus, the variety of sections reflects both the desire to systematize materials and orientation toward the interests of different age groups of readers.

For conducting a comparative analysis of approaches to teaching children and adolescents journalism, we can consider the experience of "Rastopka" newspaper in comparison with a number of other children's amateur publications functioning in educational institutions in Russia and abroad. These projects demonstrate various models of involving students in the process of creating print media and can serve as a foundation for media pedagogy.

Table 1. The newspaper has a stable structure including permanent sections that allow systematizing materials and maintaining audience interest

Section Title	Content Description	Sample Topic
Inside "Orange Planet"	Timely reports on camp events, interviews with participants, and event reviews.	"And we can dance too…"
Around "Orange Planet"	News from other project camps, city events, and greetings from former session participants.	"Not Nearby, but Together"
Trail Track	Articles on the pathfinder movement, badge-earning procedures, and interviews with forest scouts.	"What I Think About Pathfinding and What My Friends Think?"
Discussion Forum	Thematic debates and children's reflections on relevant camp and personal life issues.	"I'm Afraid… (Do Fears Prevent Us from Living?)"
Music Board	Publication of song lyrics, including original compositions, with guitar chords.	"They Lured Us In! (Yuri Zaikov)"
Literary Board	Poems, stories, and book reviews written by children.	"Greetings from the Future"
Leisure	Riddles, crosswords, puzzles, comics, and other entertainment materials.	"Wordsearch Puzzles"
Camp Kaleidoscope (Bits and Pieces)	Short news, sketches, and anecdotes about the most vivid moments of the session.	"Everything Begins on the First Day"
Parents' Column	Notes and interviews with parents, reflections on upbringing and children's leisure.	"No Parents' Day: What Children and Parents Learn from Separation"
English Corner	English-language content: riddles, reviews, and crosswords.	"Anglicisms: Parasites or Panacea?"

Russian and foreign children's amateur publications:

"Planet of Childhood" Newspaper. Within the framework of the "Fundamentals of Journalism" program, students in grades 6–9 undergo training that includes theoretical classes and practical work on creating a newspaper. The preparation process includes filling out introductory questionnaires, which allows teachers to consider individual interests and inclinations of students. Classes cover various aspects of journalistic activity, such as article writing, material design, and photography work. Thus, students receive opportunities to develop skills in various areas of journalism, which contributes to their comprehensive development.

"Iskra" Newspaper (Duldurginsky House of Children's Creativity). The "Trial by Pen" project in this institution is oriented toward creating the school newspaper "Iskra", which is published as an appendix to the district newspaper "Leninist". Students participate in various aspects of publication creation, including writing materials, design, and layout. A distinctive feature of this project is close collaboration with the district newspaper, which allows students not only to develop their skills but also to interact with professional journalists.

"Lyuboznaika" Newspaper (School IBC). In this school, journalism classes are conducted within the framework of extracurricular activities and additional education. Students in grades 3–8 master various aspects of journalistic work, including information collection and processing, illustration selection, composition, and material design. Using Microsoft Word and Publisher programs, which enables students to master skills in working with text and images.

"Zorka" Newspaper (Belarus). "Zorka" is a children's newspaper in which schoolchildren actively participate, including young correspondents, photojournalists, and bloggers. The editorial office conducts press conferences and creative meetings, and also organizes schoolchildren's participation in major events, such as the International Arts Festival "Slavianski Bazaar". The newspaper also actively uses digital platforms, including Instagram and YouTube, for audience interaction.

"Balaknama" (India). "Balaknama" is an Indian newspaper completely managed by children living in Delhi slums. It covers issues such as sexual violence, child labor, and police brutality. Children receive training as reporters and editors and participate in the material collection and

writing process. The newspaper is published monthly and distributed in several languages, including Hindi and English. This is a unique example of how children can be active participants in creating media that covers their own issues.

"Locally Sourced" (USA). "Locally Sourced" is a student publication of Maloney High School in Meriden, Connecticut. The newspaper covers various aspects of school life, including sports, arts, and events. Students participate in various roles, including photography, interviews, and editing. The preparation process includes topic planning, material collection, and layout, which contributes to developing journalism skills and teamwork abilities in students.

"Six Feet of Separation" (USA). "Six Feet of Separation" is a newspaper created by children in San Francisco during the COVID-19 pandemic. It reflects children's experiences under isolation conditions, including new daily routines and creative ways of adaptation.

In these projects, students actively participate at various stages of publication creation, including topic development, material writing, design, and layout. This contributes to developing their journalistic skills, increasing motivation and self-confidence. Thus, the experience of these projects can serve as a valuable guideline for improving approaches to teaching journalism to children and adolescents.

Comparative analysis contributes to developing methodological recommendations for journalism classes and organizing amateur children's press. Based on identified key aspects, such as students' active participation in topic development, material writing, and layout, it is possible to propose a class structure that promotes the development of journalistic skills and creative self-expression.

Empirical Research on Young Journalists' Motivation and Development of Methodological Recommendations for Organizing Journalism Education and Creating Amateur Press in Children's Camps.

To develop methodological recommendations for organizing journalism classes in children's camps, an empirical study of adolescents' motivation for journalistic activity was conducted. The research was carried out through anonymous questionnaire surveys in Google Forms format in April 2025. The survey was conducted among the target audience: children aged 12 to 17 years who attended children's camps and participated in journalism club classes for "Rastopka" newspaper, as well as students of the specialized class of the Higher School of Journalism and Mass Communications of St. Petersburg State University (based at GBOU School No 309).

Survey results showed that:
– 32.7 % of participants are not currently engaged in journalism and do not plan to do so in the future;
– 44.2 % are not engaged in journalism at the moment but express a desire to continue classes;
– 23.1 % regularly engage in journalism from one to four times per week.

To identify current interests of respondents, they were asked to specify topics they prefer to dedicate their publications to in personal blogs and social networks. It was found that:
– 61.5 % most often write about their own lives and friends;
– 44.2 % write about their hobbies and interests;
– 42.3 % share personal creativity (poems, stories, drawings, musical works);
– 15.4 % create reviews of books, films, games, and music;
– 28.8 % express personal opinions on significant social issues in publications.

Study of motivation for journalism classes showed that:
– 78.8 % consider the ability to evoke emotional response from audiences important;
– 50 % are interested in covering world events;
– 42.3 % show interest in choosing publication formats and working with audiences on online platforms.

High levels of interest in social media functioning, news content creation, media product production for digital platforms, and working with graphic and video information were also noted:
– 77 % of respondents expressed interest in studying the features of various types of media (electronic magazines, newspapers, podcasts, etc.).

In response to the open question about interests in journalism, respondents most often answered that the ability to evoke emotions in the audience, interest readers, and openly and honestly express their own position are important to them.

Regarding preferred content types, respondents were distributed as follows:
– Photo reports – 59.6 %;

– Video materials – 51.9 %;
– Articles and reports – 48.1 %;
– Interviews – 44.2 %;
– Entertainment content and reviews – 32.7 % each.

In terms of professional skill formation:
– 73.1 % of respondents would like to learn to write interesting texts;
– 63.5 % want to shoot and edit video materials;
– 57.7 % want to layout text products;
– 51.9 % want to work with photographs and illustrations.

Regarding preferences in organizing the learning process:
– 67.3 % prefer practice–oriented classes where theory is mastered through project execution;
– 63.5 % consider teamwork important;
– 60 % express interest in discussing work results collectively;
– 51.9 % show interest in participating in journalism competitions.

Analysis of attitudes toward journalism as an activity showed:
– 61.5 % perceive it as a means of creative self-expression;
– 52 % view it as an opportunity to develop relevant competencies;
– 46.2 % value the possibility of receiving feedback on their own ideas.

Regarding class frequency:
– 15.4 % would like to engage in journalism daily;
– 50 % prefer weekly sessions.

Key motivating factors:
– recognition from friends and teachers – 63.5 %;
– opportunity to publish work in popular media and on public online platforms – 57.7 %.

As main stimuli for professional growth, respondents identified:
– participation in interesting projects – 61.5 %;
– work with real editorial offices – 57.7 %.

Self–assessment of motivation:
– 23.1 % of respondents evaluate their motivation as high;
– 46.2 % as average.

Regarding the creative component of classes:
– 59.6 % consider it extremely important;
– 32.7 % consider it important but optional.

Work format with teachers:
– 88.5 % prefer independent work with mentor support;
– 98 % noted that creativity–developing assignments are interesting to them;
– 92.3 % consider the application of creative approaches in practical activities important.

Regarding self–management of the learning process:
– 50 % want to independently choose topics and methods for completing assignments;
– 42.3 % expect the teacher to indicate the direction of work without rigid regulation;
– 61.5 % consider it necessary for the teacher to act as a supportive mentor.

Interaction format:
– 69.2 % would prefer individual communication with the teacher;
– 59.6 % consider a supportive and inspiring communication style from the mentor important;
– 77 % identified the teacher's ability to inspire and motivate as the most important quality;
– 75 % noted the importance of the teacher's ability to listen to and understand students.

The conducted survey revealed current interests, motivation, and educational needs of adolescents involved in amateur children's press activities. The obtained results demonstrate that children's journalism is perceived by respondents not only as a form of leisure activity but primarily as a means of self-expression, creative realization, and participation in socially significant processes.

Most research participants show sustained interest in creating original texts, video materials, photo reports, and mastering various formats of contemporary media information. The most important aspect for them is the possibility of freely choosing publication topics, independently setting tasks, and implementing their own ideas. This emphasizes the key role of amateur children's press as a space for developing creativity, forming civic positions, and communication skills.

Respondents prefer practice-oriented class formats where the educational component is organically integrated into the creative activity process. They expect from teachers primarily support, inspiration, and assistance in revealing their own creative potential, rather than strict control. This indicates the need to reconsider teaching methods in children's journalism: effective classes should be built on principles of cooperation, initiative, and participants' independence.

Thus, amateur children's press serves as the most important mechanism for synthesizing creativity and education. It allows not only mastering professional journalism skills but also forms responsibility for one's words in children and adolescents, the ability to express and substantiate personal viewpoints, work in teams, and interact with audiences. The development of such projects is a promising direction in educational practice aimed at nurturing active, independent, and creative young citizens.

The recommendations are based on principles of activity-based, person-centered, and project-based approaches, and also consider the specifics of the age audience, features of information perception by children and adolescents, the necessity of combining creative approach and learning, as well as the modern media context.

One of the key aspects of this methodology is the priority of students' independent activity. According to the recommendations, the adult mentor is not a source of ready knowledge but acts as a facilitator who guides and supports children's initiatives. Such a model of interaction allows forming a sense of responsibility for results in schoolchildren, strengthens internal motivation, and creates space for genuine self-realization. Children's amateur press in such a format becomes not an educational simulation project, but a genuine tool for public communication.

An important place in the learning system is occupied by the principle of practical orientation. Theoretical material means exclusively that information which is necessary for performing a specific task-writing a note, interview, photo report, etc. This creates a high level of engagement since students immediately see the result of their activity – a published text, printed newspaper, or digital publication. Such an approach increases motivation, allows students to feel the significance of their work, and contributes to the formation of professional self-identification.

The recommendations also emphasize the importance of considering age characteristics. In particular, different forms of work with younger schoolchildren and adolescents are proposed: for the former-game and visual formats, for the latter – analytical genres, interviews, essays. Such an approach ensures material accessibility for each age group, contributes to developing individual trajectories, and revealing participants' personal potential.

The central element of the program consists of diverse practice formats. These include workshops – short intensives aimed at practicing one specific skill, project work related to creating full-fledged media products, and game technologies that develop creativity and communicative competencies. Equally important are excursions, meetings with professionals, and participation in competitions – all this makes learning meaningful, close to the real media environment, and simultaneously motivating.

Special attention is paid to the reflection process within the program. Each module or class ends with a comprehension stage where students share impressions, evaluate their work, and receive feedback from mentors and peers. This contributes to metacognition development, allows students to form adequate self-assessment, and strengthens critical analysis skills. Reflection becomes a crucial element of conscious learning and one of the factors of sustained personal growth.

The proposed class structure – theory, practice, game, reflection – allows achieving a pedagogically sound balance between the educational component and students' creative independence. It makes each lesson holistic, logical, and psychologically comfortable. The transition from acquiring knowledge to its immediate application, then to emotional activity, and finally to comprehension, corresponds to the basic principles of developmental education.

Thus, the proposed methodological recommendations not only meet contemporary requirements for supplementary education but also reflect current demands of journalism as a profession. In conditions of rapid digital media development, changing information landscape, and growing public demand for authentic, humanistic journalism, it is particularly important to form not only technical skills but also a value foundation in future media creators. The principles embedded in the club model – independence, critical thinking, respect for facts and opinions, ability for collective work – coincide with basic norms of professional journalistic culture. The methodology is oriented toward forming an active, responsible participant in media communication who is capable not merely of producing texts but of meaningfully participating in

information exchange, understanding their role and possible consequences of journalistic activity. In this context, the club model not only educates but also professionally prepares – it creates conditions for the formation of a new generation of journalists for whom ethics, accuracy, and openness are not abstract categories but real working tools.

Table 2. Comparative Table of Amateur Children's Publications

Publication	Degree of Children's Involvement	Key Approaches to Working with Children	Objectives and Goals	Children's Participation in the Process
"Rastopka" Newspaper (Russia)	Low involvement: the editor independently chooses topics and handles layout.	Children are limited in topic selection, content creation, and layout – they act more as performers than creators.	Fosters interest in journalism but constrains creative initiative.	Children contribute to article writing, but the editor controls the entire process.
"Planet of Childhood" (Russia)	Medium involvement: children help prepare materials but under pedagogical supervision.	Children learn through hands-on activities, including topic selection, article writing, and photo work.	Development of journalistic skills, the ability to analyze information, and work with media.	Children choose topics and write articles, but layout and final editing remain under teacher control.
"Iskra" (Russia)	Medium involvement: participation in content creation with limited autonomy.	Children write and design content and help with layout but within predefined sections.	Skill development in writing content and teamwork.	Children help write and design content, but editing is overseen by a mentor.
"Balaknama" (India)	High involvement: children fully manage the newspaper and set their own topics.	The newspaper is entirely run by children. They write articles, conduct interviews, design the paper, and even distribute it.	Children's social activism, awareness of societal issues, and development of autonomy.	Children not only write content but manage the entire process – from topic selection to distribution.
"Locally Sourced" (USA)	Medium involvement: children participate in topic selection, article writing, and layout.	The newspaper is produced with active participation of high school students who train and develop journalism skills.	Mastery of journalism skills, including interviewing, writing, and design.	Children gather information and write articles, but final editing and design are overseen by an adult mentor.
"Six Feet of Separation" (USA)	High involvement: children write articles and fully engage in the material-creation process.	A newspaper created by children during the pandemic, reflecting adolescents' experiences. Participants actively contribute to content development, writing, and design.	Coverage of teenagers, experiences under isolation and development of self-expression skills through journalism.	Children are fully involved in every stage – from topic development to writing and design.

5. Conclusion

Amateur children's and youth press occupies a special place in the structure of modern media space as a unique phenomenon at the intersection of journalism, media education, and sociocultural practice. In the course of this research, a comprehensive analysis was undertaken of both historical-theoretical aspects of the juvenile journalism phenomenon and practical experience of its organization. The obtained data allowed formulating several important conclusions that are

significant both for educators and mentors working with young authors and for the professional community of journalists and media educators.

First, the historical-theoretical review showed that the phenomenon of amateur press has been developing since the 18th century and is consistently reproduced in various educational, cultural, and social contexts. Despite changing forms and communication channels, the younger generation's desire for self-expression through media product creation remains unchanged. With the transition to the digital era, traditional newspapers and magazines are actively supplemented by internet projects, blogs, and podcasts, which requires organizers of such projects to be flexible and adaptable to new formats.

Second, children's and adolescents' participation in amateur journalism is not only a path to developing media competence and creative skills but also a crucial mechanism of socialization, formation of responsible attitude toward information, and development of communicative and critical literacy. Empirical data obtained through surveying confirm that children perceive journalism as a means of meaningful interaction with the surrounding world, a tool for expression, and a means of influence. This emphasizes the importance of preserving the genuine subjectivity of participants in such projects.

Third, comparative analysis of practices of various amateur editorial offices demonstrates that the most effective models are those that rely on principles of participation, dialogue, and respect for children's authorship. This model is represented in the best international and domestic initiatives, where the adult mentor acts not as a censor or sole expert, but as a facilitator who promotes the child's potential development, supports their initiative, and provides an educational environment.

Fourth, research results allow concluding about the significance of amateur children's press not only as a pedagogical tool but also as a space for forming professional identity of future journalists. Already within the framework of school or camp editorial offices, the most important professional values are formed: respect for facts, ethics of public expression, responsibility for one's words, and work with audiences. These attitudes become the foundation for further professional choice and sustained interest in journalism as socially significant activity.

Thus, this article not only expands understanding of possibilities and specifics of juvenile journalism but also makes a practical contribution to the development of methodology for teaching children and adolescents journalism. The obtained data and developed recommendations can be used in the supplementary education system, school clubs, children's camps, and within media educational programs of various levels. In the future, these approaches can become the foundation for creating a broader network of amateur children's editorial offices, where every child can feel like a full participant in the media process and a citizen of the information society.

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