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CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT  
(ON THE EXAMPLE OF V.A. SUKHOMLINSKY'S SCHOOL OF JOY)

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**Annotation.** *This study is based on the method of modeling educational systems of the past. Such systems were proposed by J.A. Komensky, J. Korczak, A.S. Makarenko, V.A. Sukhomlinsky, and other prominent educators of the past and present. The article provides a clear and detailed theoretical analysis of his works, identifying the main provisions and principles, as well as the ideas and methodological recommendations of his pedagogy. The study is based on the typology of the «educational environment», which consists of four types identified in the pedagogical works of J. Korczak by the contemporary Russian researcher V. Ya. Yasvin. It has been established that Sukhomlinsky's educational model belongs to the ideological vector educational model, which is only possible in conditions of creativity, freedom, and activity. Moreover, individual values are of primary importance; awareness and independence in learning are the key qualities of children who received pedagogical support from V. Sukhomlinsky in his «School of Joy». The pedagogical principle of love and respect for the child, who needs freedom of self-expression, provides an opportunity for the individual to grow and learn about the world not only in the school classroom, but also during outdoor activities and educational sessions outside the school, where fairy tales, parables, and hints Become key pedagogical methods. The*

*vivid use of artistic language serves not only as an expressive tool, but also as a pedagogical means for developing spirituality and observation skills.*

**Keywords:** *vector educational model; Sukhomlinsky; modeling, Design; expertise; school of joy.*

КУЛЬТУРНО-РАЗВИВАЮЩАЯ ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНАЯ СРЕДА  
(НА ПРИМЕРЕ «ШКОЛЫ РАДОСТИ» В.А. СУХОМЛИНСКОГО)

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**Аннотация.** *Данное исследование основано на методе моделирования образовательных систем прошлого. Такие системы были предложены Я.А. Коменским, Я. Корчаком, А.С. Макаренко, В.А. Сухомлинским и другими выдающимися педагогами прошлого и настоящего. В статье дается четкий и подробный теоретический анализ их работ, выявляются основные положения и принципы, а также идеи и методологические рекомендации их педагогики сотрудничества. Исследование основано на типологии «образовательной среды», которая состоит из четырех типов, выделенных в педагогических трудах Я. Корчака современным российским исследователем В. Я. Ясвиным. Установлено, что образовательная модель В.А. Сухомлинского относится к идеологической векторной образовательной модели, которая возможна только в условиях творчества, свободы и активности. Более того, индивидуальные ценности имеют первостепенное значение; осознанность и самостоятельность в обучении – ключевые качества детей, получившие педагогическую поддержку в модели «Школы радости» В.А. Сухомлинского. Педагогический принцип любви и уважения к ребенку, нуждающемуся в свободе самовыражения, дает возможность личности расти и познавать мир не*

*только в школьном классе, но и во время активного отдыха и образовательных занятий за пределами школы, где сказки, притчи и намеки становятся неотъемлемой частью жизни и основным педагогическим методом. Яркое использование художественного языка служит не только выразительным средством, но и педагогическим инструментом развития духовности и наблюдательности.*

**Ключевые слова:** векторная образовательная модель; Сухомлинский; моделирование, дизайн; экспертиза; школа радости.

### **Introduction**

The International Commission of UNESCO on Education for the 21-st Century, since 1996, considers such personal qualities and values of the individual as: creativity, communication, cooperation, leadership and responsibility, as well as – motivation of graduates to work, as key educational results. The question arises: «Where to find such an educational model that would form/develop such personal qualities?» In search of answers to this question, we under took an attempt of theoretical analysis and modeling of educational environment and pedagogical systems available in the treasury of the world pedagogical experience. It is worth nothing that such an educational environment is relevant in today's Schools, where children's cognitive and creative activities are strictly regulate by administrative traditions and a classroom system.

Review of scientific research This study is based on the method of modeling educational systems of the past. Such systems were proposed by J. Komensky, J. Korczak, A. Makarenko, V. Sukhomlinsky, and other outstanding educators of the past and present. For example, V. Sukhomlinsky created a pedagogy focused on the creative human being, on the development of individuality, freedom, creativity, and independence in choosing and making decision. The educational environment designed by him was focused on personal self-realization through the development of children's independence and high intellectual enthusiasm: the elimination of learning failure by the students themselves, while the learning process itself was imbued with a spirit of freedom and creativity. Based on the analysis of scientific literature, we have hypothesized that each pedagogical system Meet the conditions of a specific

educational environment (Yasvin, 2001; Yasvin, 2025), which, from our point of view, is of 4 types: 1) dogmatic; 2) serene; 3) external gloss and career; 4) ideological (in creative Teams) in relation to P. Lesgaft «school types» (Lesgaft, 2025), which include: 1) normal type; 2) benevolent; 3) expressed; 4) maliciously beaten type; 5) mildly beaten type; 6) ambitious; 7) hypocritical type. The purpose of the study is to present V. Sukhomlinsky's system: «School of Joy» as a developing educational environment that enrich the experience of modern Russian Schools and pedagogy, based on the analysis and author's interpretation of his pedagogical legacy.

### **Research methods**

Research methods: theoretical analysis, modeling, author's interpretation, and associate experiment. The methodology for the theoretical analysis of educational environment types is based on the typology of «educational environment» and the four types mentioned above, proposed by J. Korczak (Korczak, 2025). His world-renowned book «How to Love a Child» is a combination of respect and love for children, who require positive freedom of self-expression and fruitful personal fulfillment, as well as independence and joy in exploring their environment. In terms of humanistic spirit and vector, Janusz Korczak is closest to another outstanding educator, Vasily Sukhomlinsky. Results Let's start our analysis of the develop mental educational environment by examining the pedagogical system of Vasily Sukhomlinsky, a prominent humanist educator of the mid-20th century, who attempt ed to transform the traditional pedagogical system.

Sukhomlinsky created the «School of Joy» for primary school children and their parents in order to preserve the child's initial curiosity and cognitive interest in school and knowledge. As part of this program, he conducted educational classes for parents. In the parents school, he delivered lectures on pedagogy and psychology of age, personality, and motivation, as well as Theories of sexual and moral education. The School of Joy was established with the aim of developing the child's intellectual and physical natural abilities in the presence of nature and through the involvement of children in collaborative intellectual or physical activities. The method of rewarding work prevailed over the method of punishing laziness, and school marks brought joy

and optimism. In the first Grades, failing Grades were abolished to avoid suppressing the natural curiosity and age-appropriate desire to learn.

Sukhomlinsky's pedagogical system is most fully reflected in his work «I Give My Heart to Children» (Sukhomlinsky, 2021b), which was first published in 1948, first in Germany and then in Russia. The book is a unique blend of philosophical views and scientific research, contemplation and observation, care and love, responsibility and freedom, awareness and creative activity; it is the practical experience of V. Sukhomlinsky as a teacher and as a writer with a high artistic talent. According to the humanistic tradition, at the very beginning of his work, V. Sukhomlinsky wrote: «I realized that in order to Become a true educator of children, one must give them their heart» (Sukhomlinsky, 2021b). In our opinion, this quotes most fully reflects the humanistic position of a teacher towards children.

Here, along with humanism, he pro claimed a new type of creative person who was ready to cooperate. This image was constituent with the goal of education at the time, which was to create a new type of person. In V.A. Sukhomlinsky's educational system, the educational process was individualized: «The ability to correctly determine what each student is capable of at a given moment and how to develop their intellectual abilities in the future is an extremely important component of pedagogical wisdom» (Sukhomlinsky, 2021b, p. 21). Sukhomlinsky was a proponent of an individualized approach in education. To take into account the individual characteristics of each participant in the educational process, it was necessary to know their abilities and talents; to be able to determine the amount of academic workload and the time allocated for completing a study assignment. The assignments themselves were distributed based on the abilities and difficulty of the teacher, but students were also encouraged to make their own choices based on their decision-making skills.

The educational environment of the School of Joy was develop mental and had to provide conditions in which children Experience a thirst for knowledge; cognitive interest; joy of discovering new things: joy of learning and joy of overcoming educational difficulties. «Cherish the children's spark of curiosity, inquisitiveness, and thirst for knowledge. The only source is the joy of success» (Sukhomlinsky, 2021b).

Thus, the most important element of Sukhomlinsky's pedagogical system was the individual approach and creativity, Around which the entire educational environment was organized – the joy of learning: «We will teach the child to think, and we will open up to him the source of thought – the world Around him. We will give him the greatest human joy – the joy of learning» (Sukhomlinsky, 2021b). It is also undeniable that the interests and values of the individual remained a priority in this pedagogical system.

In Sukhomlinsky's works, the verb «to encourage» and «to inspire» are most often used in relation to a teacher: «A teacher should inspire students with their integrity, the beauty of their ideological and moral principles, their intellectual wealth, and their hard work. They should encourage students to work diligently and creatively» (Sukhomlinsky 2021b). The teacher's role was to «inspiring confidence in success».

«The teacher, focusing on the interests of each student's personality, determined the curriculum, but did not impose it, and instead organized the children's learning activities in a way that maintained their interest in learning rather than suppressing it with failing Grades» (Failing Grades were abolished in the first Grades. This tradition was Later continued by Shalva Amonashvili (Amonashvili, 2020). Through these humanistic methods, the teacher contributed to improving the academic performance of his students (including praise and acknowledging the parents' contributes).

Boris Likhachev strongly criticized this humanistic strategy in the Uchitelskaya Gazeta in the 1960s, seeing it as a Christian spirit and a detachment from the reality of the world Around us, such as «humanity in general» (Likhachev, 1968). Sukhomlinsky's thoughts on the teacher's personality are notable: «The most beautiful and subtle teaching methods are effective only when there is a living individuality in the teacher» (Sukhomlinsky, 1980).

Sukhomlinsky's reasoning about the teacher's personality is characteristic: «The most beautiful and subtle methodology is effective only when there is a living individuality of the teacher" (Sukhomlinsky, 1980). The book «I Give My Heart to Children» was written in the best traditions of educational pedagogical thought, in the genre of a pedagogical novel; a novel of education. The book was placed on the same axiological line with the works of Locke, Korczak, and Makarenko. It is important to

note that for educational and humanistic teachers, a person is, first and foremost, rational! Reasonableness implies activity, independence, positive free will, feelings, and attitudes of the subject of the educational environment, which are associated with responsibility.

It follows from this that the joy of knowing the world stems from the need to rebuild it on rational principles and to bring man out of his state of «im maturity» (Kant, 1966) (Kant's term), and the Great hope with the optimistic vector of the Enlightenment is that the world can and should (there is a need and an opportunity) be changed for the better. It was a deep interest in the improvement of human nature that give rise to many humanistic trends and concepts in pedagogy, one of which was the concept of the «enlightened heart» by V. Sukhomlinsky. The book «I Give My Heart to Children» is difficult to analyze from a scientific point of view; its quotes do not provide recipes for all situations or ready-made answers to pressing educational issues, but rather require scientific research and Thoughtful reading. The answers may be found in Sukhomlinsky's parables and fairy tales. This is a work of art that addresses the emotional, intellectual, and spiritual-moral aspects of the readers' personalities.

Thus, gradually, the result of education was the formation of a physically strong, active, and virtuous personality with a clear mind and knowledge, as well as the ability to control oneself. Sukhomlinsky's pedagogy convinces us that this is a creative educational environment with a kind-hearted personality type according to Lesgaft, which is focused on analytical activities. This type of activity is always characterized by independence. Later, we will see that there is some co-dependence, which manifests itself as «co-rejoicing in the success of one's comrades» (V. Sukhomlinsky's term); in the teacher's interest in the student's fate, etc. (Sukhomlinsky, 2021b). In this regard, we can talk about the career type of personality according to P. Lesgaft. Let us turn to the methodology of vector modeling of educational environments by V. Yasvin (Yasvin, 2001).

The methodology can be visualized as follows: the modeling of the educational environment involves two axes in the coordinate system: one axis represents «freedom-dependence», and the other axis represents «activity-passivity». The modeling of the

vector (educational environment) in the coordinate system can be achieved by answering six questions. Three questions focus on the child's potential for activity (initiative, perseverance, and struggle), while the other three questions explore the child's potential for free development (independence and autonomy). The answers to these questions allow for the construction of a vector and the identification of the type of educational environment. The six diagnostic questions are as follows: Questions on the scale: «creativity-addiction» 1) Whose interests are prioritized a) the individual b) society (group)? The priority of personal interests adds a point on the scale: «freedom». The priority of public interests adds a point on the scale: «addiction»; 2) Who adapts to whom in the process of interaction? a) the educator to the child; b) the child to the educator. A point on the «freedom» scale is added if you choose a). 3) Which form of education is prioritized in this educational environment? a) individual; b) collective. Choosing the individual form adds a point on the «freedom» scale. Questions on the «activity-passivity» scale; 4) Is child punishment practiced in the educational environment? a) Yes b) No. The absence of punishment is considered a condition for the development of activity; 5) Is the child's activity encouraged in this educational environment? a) Yes b) A positive response is considered an opportunity for activity. 5) Does the child's creativity in this educational environment 1) Yes 2) No. If the answer is positive, it adds a point to the «activity» scale.

Features of the «School of Joy» as a developing educational environment: 1) creation of a favorable pedagogical atmosphere. The school should provide an environment of joy, benevolence. This is achieved through open communication, mutual assistance, pedagogical support, encouragement of independence, activity and creativity of everyone who studies; 2) increase in motivation to learn and the level of school performance. All who go to school with joy and pleasure, whose successes are noticed and supported, will always strive to learn something new! Sukhomlinsky attached Great importance to the development of students' self-esteem for the results achieved! 3) the development of interaction skills; positive relations in the team; 4) focus on the strengths of children. The principle of relying on the positive was fundamental in the pedagogical system of V. Sukhomlinsky; 5) encouragement of

achievements and creative activity. School mark was a reward, not a punishment for academic work.

The encouragement of creative activity was carried out through activities in nature. Observing natural phenomena was intended to develop children's mental activity. Thus, Sukhomlinsky aimed to make children happy. The creative essence of individuality education is reflected in V. Sukhomlinsky's statement: «Here is a child who has difficulty with mathematics, finds it challenging to learn grammar, and lacks a strong mathematical or artistic mind set. But what does he have? There is, like every human being, an inexhaustible soul with that unseen, unseen facet of potential in which lies his happiness, his future. If an educator discovers and grinds this facet, then he can become a talented Machine operator, a talented grain grower, a talented carpenter – if only he can open his only facet» (Sukhomlinsky, 2021a, p. 5).

Sukhomlinsky's reasoning about freedom is interesting: «There is no absolute freedom, and there cannot be, because a person lives among people» (Sukhomlinsky, 2021a, p. 8). A free educational environment is ensured by the methods of hidden organizations of children's educational activities and guarantees the development of an active and creative personality. For Sukhomlinsky, the ideal educational environment is a school of joy, where children retain their natural curiosity and the joy of discovering new things. The desire to learn is preserved because it is not interrupted by the teacher, is not cut off in the middle, and is not interrupted by a shout, remark, or punishment, and the learning process itself is designed to take into account the age-related characteristics of primary school children. Sukhomlinsky, as a teacher of language and literature, noticed that at the beginning of their schooling, most children want to learn at school and strive for knowledge, but by the end of primary school, this desire to learn is lost.

Initially, children strive to bring joy to their parents with their school achievements. The joy of learning depends on whether the parents notice or ignore the child's success, and whether the teacher discourages the student's creative pursuits. Sukhomlinsky opposed situations where the teacher assumes an authoritarian role towards the child. According to his position, adults should study children in order to

effectively help them grow up: «You can't turn a child's heart into a timid bird that hides in a corner of its cage, waiting for punishment» (Sukhomlinsky, 2021). Later, this educational model would be known as Cooperative pedagogy. For Sukhomlinsky, independence, consciousness, and responsibility are the key qualities of a child when they are given the opportunity to express their positive freedom and creative activity in learning.

The educational environment here is far from serene; it is filled with real-life events and challenges. Sukhomlinsky's pedagogy is not confined to the classroom; it is based on 33 years of practical experience as a teacher. His concept of the joy of learning is reflected in his «Letters to His Son» (Sukhomlinsky, 2021). Thus, the analysis of the educational environment designed by Sukhomlinsky along the axis of «freedom-dependence»; «activity-passivity»; «creativity-dogmatism»; leaves no doubt in favor of freedom, activity, and creativity. The problem of discipline is described in detail by Sukhomlinsky. His pedagogical position was expressed as follows: «A bully, a deliberate disciplinary offender, does not suddenly appear. It is created by years of callousness, indifference, and heartlessness on the part of adults» (Sukhomlinsky, 2021). Discipline is strengthened through work, mutual assistance, and mutual responsibility. The reason for a child's violation of discipline is the callousness, indifference, and heartlessness of adults.

Praise moves from the teacher's personal position to a role-based position, and it is not based on the unstable foundation of spontaneous emotional reactions, but rather on describing the child's actions through fairy tales and parables. Thus, praise becomes a pedagogical method for fostering morality with the goal of shaping a new type of person who is a creator of their own life, building it like a Home. In this context, the student is the subject of activity, embodying will, feelings, and relationships. The teacher, on the other hand, is a mentor and friend who remains invested in the student's well-being. Pedagogical influence is carried out in a hidden, non-directive form through interaction. Unquestioning obedience is replaced here by References for elders.

Punishment in Sukhomlinsky's pedagogical system could be carried out in the

form of individual educational Conversation between the teacher and the student: «A child should not be punished for anything» (Sukhomlinsky, 2021b). The last sentences is completely in line with Makarenko's principle of tomorrow's joy: «Tomorrow, the child will be better than yesterday...»; «The best in a child must be designed, and the teacher is obligated to do so» (Makarenko, 2023). A scientific analysis of V.A. Sukhomlinsky's works aimed at identifying the teacher's position on creativity allowed us to identify several methodological recommendations:

1) to conduct school classes in nature; outside the school walls; in the schoolyard, in the field or on the lawn;

2) to tell stories, parables and fairy tales, filling them with moral meaning and upbringing content;

3) to encourage children to observe;

4) to awakening spirituality and morality;

5) to encourage the development of speech and imagination, and the composition of stories and fairy tales. So, the manifestation of creativity by children in educational and extracurricular activities finds pedagogical support in Sukhomlinsky. Thus, the consideration of Sukhomlinsky's pedagogical system on the «activity-passivity» axis shows the orientation of the modeling vector towards activity: the answers to three diagnostic questions allow us to mark three points on this scale. If we add the «social wind» vector to the «creative» vector of the educational environment designed by Sukhomlinsky, we will obtain a vector that characterized the personality that is formed in this environment.

Thus, the consideration of Sukhomlinsky's pedagogical system on the «activity-passivity» axis shows the orientation of the modeling vector towards activity: the answers to three diagnostic questions allow us to mark three points on this scale. If we add the «social wind» vector to the «creative» vector of the educational environment designed by Sukhomlinsky, we will obtain a vector that characterized the personality that is formed in this environment. In this case, there is a complete confidence of the directions of the vector of the «creative», «free», and «career» educational environment, resulting in a kind of «resonance» of these forces influencing the

individual. As a result, a creative individual is characterized by internal freedom, coupled with responsibility for their own educational outcome, combines with positive activity.

We believed that the creative type of personality and the free educational environment, multiplied by the high awareness of each individual and the high intellectual background in the team, is established by the humanistic methods of V. Sukhomlinsky and is focused on encouragement rather than punishment and the establishment of discipline. This type of personality was formed in different historical eras, from the Renaissance to the 19th century, from Russia to Italy, from L. Tolstoy (Tolstoy, 2024) to M. Montessori (Montessori, 2024). This type of educational environment provides opportunities for students to develop independence and responsibility in achieving educational outcome on their own, but if necessary, they can receive hidden support from their teachers, which is organized through humane methods of pedagogical influence through interaction in the «School of Joy» (Andreeva, 2025). Because it is the School of Joy that creates conditions for creativity and activity.

Sukhomlinsky was always a supporter of the education of individuality, taking into account age and individual differences. At the same time, it is worth noting that Sukhomlinsky, like J. Korczak, was able to organized the education of individuality in a collective environment. Sukhomlinsky combines the individual content of education with a collective form. The collective did not hinder the individuality of each person. On the contrary, students with poor academic performance were placed under the patronage of their peers. Thanks to the high intellectual background of the educational process, each student remained aware, responsible, and engaged.

The method of punishment (in the form of individual Conversation with lagging students, etc.) after lessons, as well as the method of encouragement (in the form of Letters of thanks to parents of children, etc.) occupies an important place in Sukhomlinsky's pedagogical practice. According to the results of the associative experiment, the educational environment designed by the Sukhomlinsky Association in this study is mainly Blue and green! The creative educational environment, designed

by V. Sukhomlinsky, is in the vector between freedom and activity: from Zh. Rousseau to J. Locke (Locke, 2025), but always next to J. Korczak. Sometimes creative activity contributes to the creation of a career environment, and V. Sukhomlinsky does not abandon the traditions of A. Makarenko, which suggest a certain co-dependence of children in the student community, where one child expresses «co-rejoicing» in the success of another (V. Sukhomlinsky's term).

### **Conclusion**

In general, the historical and pedagogical analysis shows that the educational environments of the creative and career type (Korchak-Makarenko-Sukhomlinsky) Meet the trends of the current time with its loses of cognitive interest and creative activity among school children and their need for self-realization, the opportunities for which are hidden in these pedagogical systems. Encouragement is a key method of education and training by V. Sukhomlinsky; – Activity and creativity are encouraged. – Individual values are placed above public ones. When Designing an educational environment for children, V. Sukhomlinsky strove to ensure freedom. In this regard, the environment can be considered «serene», but not entirely, as Sukhomlinsky's pedagogical system retains elements of overcoming educational difficulties through the efforts of the participants in the educational process.

Most modern Russian Schools are still focused on finding new pedagogical methods and tools. However, the already existing and well-established pedagogical system of V. Sukhomlinsky, which was tested in school practice in the 1970s in the USSR and is correctly used in China, remains underutilized in Russia. Thus, the pedagogical system of V. Sukhomlinsky can be classified as follows: – as a creative environment for free personal activity; – as a serene environment partially (for lagging behind students) with a Benevolent personality type; – or as a career educational environment of dependent activity, Corresponding to the ambitious personality type according to P. Lesgaft

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