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## Methodological and Practical Aspects of Carrying out Business Games in Institutes of Higher Education

*Use of business games in the education process is one of the most actual directions of the increase of effectiveness of educational activity in any direction, and especially professions connected with working with people: personnel management, psychology, pedagogy, etc.*

*The author of the article focuses on the urgency, some features of business games, and their adaptation within the limits of the curriculum of institutes of higher education and brings forward concrete exercises at various stages of carrying out business games, the business game "Effective Presentation of Young Specialists in the Labour Market".*

**Key words:** *business games, training, personnel management.*

The fundamental task of new educational standards is formation in training of a complex of competences which enable the graduating student of the institute of higher education to solve professional problems facing him/her competently. The necessity of a non-standard system of training of experts became a stimulus for broad application of business games, trainings in education, personnel selection and appraisal.

The greatest problems appear at the inclusion of business games in the educational process in institutes of higher education as there are some restrictions. First, in curricula and standard programs the use of business games is not provided. Secondly, there are no reasonable standards for teachers on definition of a necessary time on development and carrying out business games. Social and psychological support of game interaction of participants of studies is insufficiently developed.

Nevertheless, the use of business games makes it possible to show the process of systematization of theoretical knowledge of solution of certain practical problems that is a logical conclusion of the process of training therefore optimum conditions for business games are in the final stage of high school training since advanced students possess a certain level of knowledge and are able to work independently.

Business game is a method of imitation of decision-making of executives or experts in various production situations, carried out according to the complex of rules by a group of people or a person with the personal computer in a dialogue mode, in the presence of conflict situations or information uncertainty [2].

Business game is usually considered as modeling of the expert's real activity in various created situations. Business games enable to experience a certain



situation, to learn it in a first-hand action. Participants playing roles have to make decisions in conditions of uncertainty, being beyond standard thinking, to rise to its higher level affecting such processes as use of knowledge, the analysis, synthesis and development of a judgment. Role-playing reveals the existence of critical thinking, communicative skills and ability to make decisions independently; there are also shown such personal qualities as behavior in critical situations, team work etc.

Thus, requirements to educational business games are the following: the task has to be actual; for its decision there should be basic knowledge, imagination and creative abilities of students; a problem should be difficult enough, but available to the decision, it should impel to use of available knowledge and search of the new principles, facts, and methods of decision.

They distinguish the following psychological and pedagogical principles of the business game organization [4]:

- 1) the principle of imitating modeling of specific conditions and dynamics of production. Modeling of real conditions of professional activity of the expert in the whole variety of official, social and personal relations is a basis of methods of interactive training;
- 2) the principle of game modeling of the content and forms of professional activity. Realization of this principle is a necessary condition of educational game as it carries training functions;
- 3) the principle of joint activity. In the business game this principle demands realization by means of involvement of several participants in cognitive activity. It demands the choice and the characteristic of roles, determination of their powers, interests and means of activity. Thus the most characteristic types of professional interaction of "officials" are revealed and modelled;
- 4) the principle of dialogical communication. In this principle there is a necessary condition of achievement of educational purposes. Dialogue, discussion with the maximum participation of all players may generate really creative work. Learners' detailed collective discussion of a teaching material enables to achieve their complex representation of professionally significant processes and activity;
- 5) the principle of a double-planning character. The principle of a double-planning character reflects the development of real personal characteristics of the expert in "imaginary", game conditions. The developer defines goals of two kinds reflecting real and game contexts in educational activity;
- 6) the principle of problematical character of the content of the imitating model and the process of its unfolding in game activity [4].

Characteristic signs of a business game may be presented in the following list [2].



1. Modeling of the process of work (activity) of executive employees and specialists of enterprises and organizations on elaboration of administrative decisions.
2. Realization of the “chains of decisions” process. As the modelled system is considered as dynamic in business game, results in the fact that the game doesn't not add up to the solution of one problem, and demands a “chain of decisions”. Participants' solution the first stage, influences the model and changes its initial condition. A condition change enters a game complex, and on the basis of the obtained information the participants of a game develop the decision at its second stage.
3. Casting of game participants.
4. Distinction of role purposes in decisions which promote contradictions between participants, the conflict of interests.
5. Existence of a controlled emotional tension.
6. Interaction of the participants playing different roles.
7. Existence of a common game goal for the whole game team.
8. Game participants' collective decisions.
9. Multialternativeness of decisions.
10. Existence of the system of individual or group estimation of game participants' activity.

Let's consider an alternate of carrying out business game which was elaborated by the author for students of the faculty of economics of the specialty “Personnel Management”; undoubtedly, it will be actual for other specialties. The game is meant for 2 couples, i.e. 3 hours, a group from 15 to 30 persons.

The game subject: “Effective Presentation of Young Specialists in the Labour Market”.

The game purpose: to consolidate the received theoretical knowledge in the field of personnel management; to learn to operate effectively on a labor market of young specialists; to gain skills of drawing up personnel documents; to acquire skills of public address.

Game problems:

- to outline problems within this subject;
- to structure the earlier studied material on the suggested problems;
- to make active players' thinking activity;
- to correct the discussion development within the suggested subject;
- to develop a common decision on problems suggested for discussion during participants' discussion.

The game scenario may look as follows (See table 1).

Let's consider the stages of carrying out business game in more detail:

At the beginning of the study the teacher focuses on a game, speaks about game purposes, aims, rules.



At the first stage it is important to make participants ready for the game, to intensify their mental processes, to activate their attention. For this purpose they “limber up”, meet each other.

Table 1

**The Game Scenario**

<b>The Stage Number</b>	<b>The Stage Name and Content</b>	<b>The Time of a Stage Fulfilment (in minutes)</b>
1	Attitude towards game	5
2	Warm-up	20-30
3	Mini-lecture	15-20
4	Theme exercises	20-30
5	Attitude toward the main game carrying out	5
6	Cast	10
7	Individual and group work	10-15
8	Work of game teams	40-60
9	Results	10-15
	Total	180

*Exercise 1.* Write down your name and characterize yourself according to each letter of the name, for example, Alex – active, leading, etc.

*Exercise 2.* Tell us please, how do you see yourself in a year after your graduation.

*Exercise 3.* Tell about a fellow student. What is his/her character? What is he/she fond of? Where does he/she like to work?

These exercises, on the one hand, improve energy, activity and involvement of game participants, promote confidence in the group, and also help the teacher with arrangement of roles in the sequel, on the other hand, increase participants' motivation and bring the group closer to a mini-lecture subject in a striking way.

At the second stage depending on the curriculum the teacher states a new material or generalizes the studied (“mini-lecture”).

The following stage is carrying out subject exercises to give the chance to participants to show the activity, to reveal own strengths and weaknesses, to work, using the acquired knowledge.

*Exercise 1 (tolerance, conflictness).* You are to make a long train journey, tell us who you would like to see as your passenger travelling in the same compartment; please, range from “pleasant” to “unacceptable” the following variants: the Gipsy, homosexual, young man with AIDS, untidily dressed woman with a little child, Muslim Caucasian, countryman with a big sack, African student, teenager looking like a narcomaniac, former prisoner, Tajik in national clothes, police of-



ficer, disabled person with a folding wheelchair, Krishnaist, Chinese who eats strangely smelling food, person talking gibberish.

*Exercise 2 (stress tolerance, conflictness).* Half of students take seats on the chairs standing in a circle with their back to the center the center; they give them a short text or a poem which they have to learn in 5 minutes. The second half of students, facing them, move slowly around and try to disturb them – talk, sing, wave their hands etc. At the end somebody cites the poem, then groups change.

*Exercise 3 (stress tolerance, ability to plan own time).* They give to students a short text which they have to read and remember in 5 minutes. After a while the teacher says that in the text it is necessary to emphasize the letter “a”, and then to count all letters “p”, after a minute – all letters “o”, etc.

*Exercise 4 (communicative skills).* The exercise is a “Chinese whispers” variation; a short is retold in a chain of students.

*Exercise 5 (behavior in the conflict).* Students are divided into couples, one of participants clench his fist, the second one has to unclench it in any possible way – persuasion, bribery, force etc. Couples switch over.

*Exercise 6 (creativity).* They discuss such questions as, “What would be if men and women switched over?”, “That if people learned to read the thoughts of people?” etc.

*Exercise 7 (creativity).* Students should find the greatest number of possible variants of use of simple subjects, such as: bucket, rope, towel etc.

These exercises show the degree of participants’ conflictness, promote the decrease in egocentric tendencies in behavior and thinking, aggravate social sensitivity, actualize creative potential, reduce self-control, form the attitude towards perception of new information, expand stereotypes, reduce the threshold of taking another’s point of view, increase the adequacy of self-appraisal and mutual estimates and help the teacher at a cast stage.

The fourth stage is carrying out the main game.

According to the idea of the general structure of methods of active training, the object imitating model (in this case it is professional activity), which in combination with environment (an external environment of imitating model) forms the game problem content is a key, central element.

Characters are the students organized in teams and playing individual or command roles. Thus both the model and characters are in the game environment representing a professional, social and public context of experts’ activity imitated in the game. Game activity appears in the form of variable influence on the imitating model, depending on its condition and carried out during participants’ interaction regulated by rules.

The system of participants’ influence on imitating model during their interaction can be considered as a management model. The whole game activity occurs against the background and according to the didactic model of the game including such elements as a game model of activity, system of estimation, ac-



tion of game technics and all that ensures the achievement of game educational purposes.

### **The scenario of the business game**

#### **“Effective Presentation of Young Specialists in the Labour Market”**

Proceeding from the group structure, the teacher makes a preliminary distribution of players on game teams, and also gives tasks, instructs during game, observation and consultation of group work, provides a necessary quantity of a manipulative material, warns about necessary stationery.

Role groups (Table 2) should show the organization of activity according to the chosen role which would lead, on the one hand, to effective employment of a certain number of young specialists; on the other hand, to implementation of plans of employers on providing human resources.

*Table 2*

**Role groups and instructions to game participants<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Role groups</b>	<b>Instruction to game participants</b>
Young specialists with good results	Seek to find professional job, search for information, form an independent strategy of job search.
Young specialists with average results	Seek to find professional job, search for information, form the strategies of job search job search strategy on the advice of the third parties (parents, friends, etc.).
Employees of Career Centers of institutes of higher education	Carries out consulting support of interaction of key subjects of a labor market of young specialists.
Employees of Career Centers	Realize the state supports of young specialists' employment.
Heads of practical training	Form institutes of effective graduates' adaptation to a labor market.
The employers working with young specialists	Actively realize interaction strategies with institutes of higher education
The employers never working with young specialists	Actively cooperate with recruiting agencies and employment services
Consultants of recruiting agencies	Develop the “Recruiting of Young Specialists” area

<sup>1</sup> Developed by the author after L.S. Skachkova's "Theory and Practice of Effective Presentations" [tp://sfedu.ru/www/umr.umr\\_show?p\\_startpage=4&p\\_umr\\_name=&p\\_umr\\_author=&p\\_umrc\\_id=&p\\_umr\\_id=&p\\_per\\_id=3157](http://sfedu.ru/www/umr.umr_show?p_startpage=4&p_umr_name=&p_umr_author=&p_umrc_id=&p_umr_id=&p_per_id=3157).



Experts of portals for employment and development of graduates' career	Develop the strategy of interaction of key subjects of a labor market
Representatives of the committee on youth policy of the city	Realize programs of grant support of talented youth
Representatives of students' trade union	Defend the interests of students and graduates on a labor market
Training centers (language, professional)	Offer a comprehensive list of educational and professional programs
Representatives of the faculty academic council	Carry out the strategic planning of educational programs of institutes of higher education
Parents of graduates of higher education institutions	Try to place their children quickly and with a high pay
Experts	Supervise the actions, behavior of main participants, and also the work of all members of game teams to whom they are bound. They estimate other speakers and other teams, except their own team, by the criteria of estimates offered by the teacher.
Game techniques	Game techniques help the teacher and are responsible for efficient casting, observance of work regulations, dynamism of behavior and activity of all players of the team.

According to casting students take seats according to subgroups which, on the one hand, seek for cooperation with each other, on the other part, have a competition element, both in subgroups, and within group as a whole. Participants prepare presentations of their roles taking into account own experience or those offered by the teacher: a young specialist – high achiever – wants to get a job of the director of personnel management in a shop of a large distribution network, a young specialist with average progress, according to the recommendation of parents, turns to a job center, an employer looks for a human resources manager, another – an employee of a personnel department, etc. Students state their requirements achieved during discussion, involving all game participants in discussion.

The last stage is drawing conclusions, feedback.

At the stage of drawing conclusions experts represent quantitative results of estimation and a composite score of the team work, using the form of the expert's estimates (See table 3).

The most important procedure of the stage consists in discussion of game results for the purpose of increase of efficiency of decisions, disclosure of posi-



tive and negative aspects in of game (teams) participants' activity; clarification of the reasons influencing game results, determination of suitability of the business game as a method of training, level of its organization.

Discussion of the business game results has a main goal to bring participants closer to understanding of those most effective decisions which were possible in the given situation, to create a line of behavior for future games (situations), to coordinate the imitated process to real productive relations and problems, to consolidate the acquired knowledge.

In conclusion the teacher generalizes information presented during performances, forms conclusions and gives advices on the discussed subject. At the end of the game we recommend to encourage winners (formal documents, special prizes, test points, etc.).

The offered business game, finally, is aimed at increase of the efficiency of seminar studies and at the development of students' skills of complex analysis of social and economic situations, considering the whole complexity and contradictoriness.

Table 3

**The form of the expert's estimates**

<b>The criterion name</b>	<b>The evaluative scale (score)</b>	<b>Actual estimation</b>
The quality of the analysis of a condition of career planning and development, completeness of the career plan development	From 0 to 10	
The quality of the report defence: ability to state basic provisions, to push the team point of view and to perceive the opposite one, to answer the questions of the opponent	From 0 to 5	
Accuracy of observance of rules	From 0 to 5	
The activity of the team in the group work	From -3 to +3	
The activity of teams - opponents at discussion of other reports	From -3 to +3	
The ability to conduct debate	From -3 to +3	
non-observance of rules by: a game team a speaker	-3 -1	
Total:		

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