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## Educational legacy of Ivan Savenkov

**Larisa Yu. Aisner**

PhD in Culturology, Associate Professor,  
Krasnoyarsk State Agrarian University,  
660130, 90 Mira av., Krasnoyarsk, Russian Federation;  
e-mail: larisa-ajsner@yandex.ru

**Svetlana V. Bershadsckaya**

Senior Lecturer,  
Krasnoyarsk State Agrarian University,  
660049, 90 Mira av., Krasnoyarsk, Russian Federation;  
e-mail: bsv97@yandex.ru

### Abstract

The effective educational practices that generally improve learning constitute one of the major challenges for educators in various parts of the world. Furthermore it has also been stated that in any educational setting guidelines for effective educational practices require continuing evaluation and sensible application. For this reason it becomes relevant to study the heritage of the talented educators of the past who were innovators among their contemporaries and whose civic stand and cultural creativity not only influenced but to some extent shaped everyday life of students, their mentality and identity performances. One of them was Ivan Savenkov, Siberian educator and scientist. The brilliant graduate of St.-Petersburg University I. Savenkov was the director of Krasnoyarsk Teacher's Seminary which trained teachers for rural schools. I. Savenkov was sure that for a teacher, especially a teacher for rural areas, it was not enough to acquire principles of educational work but it was equally important to gain knowledge of the laws of the nature of a child living and developing in the given environment and to be able to apply it appropriately. Descriptions of Krasnoyarsk Teacher's Seminary and pedagogical works show that I. Savenkov as its director and teacher really managed to turn the seminary into the pedagogical laboratory where would be teachers could develop their cognitive interest, acquire knowledge, learn to think and work. The Krasnoyarsk Teacher's Seminary became not only the place of popularization of knowledge but also the center of cultural life of the townspeople of the Yeniseysk Province.

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Pedagogy, teaching methods, cognitive activity, everyday life, pedagogy.

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## Introduction

Education measures the level of public conscience, the possibility to manage societal development and its trends. Education forms methodological culture of each individual and society in general. [Aisner, Bogdan, 2016,186-187]. Identifying effective educational practices that generally improve learning is a complicated process involving years of analysis and expert opinion. The research on improving student achievement through effective educational practices has accumulated over centuries.

The educational practices applied by Ivan Savenkov, a great Siberian educator and scientist of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, await their proper recognition due to their practical applicability and absence of excessive theorizing. Present-day educators may find them valuable in investigating the applicability of the practices in their particular circumstances. As with any educational practices they can be effectively or ineffectively used, and the results may vary accordingly. Practices applied by Ivan Savenkov at Krasnoyarsk Teacher's Seminary, his teaching by example were generally powerful and consistent in promoting important aspects of academic learning [Makarov, 2007, 95-97]. As the result the expansion of educational and cultural facilities became a fact of everyday life for many students and members of the urban community in Krasnoyarsk and in the Yeniseysk Province.

## Biography

Ivan Savenkov (1846-1914), a bright graduate of St.-Petersburg University, started his teaching career in 1871 in Krasnoyarsk, the Yeniseysk Province. In 1873 when Krasnoyarsk Teacher's Seminary opened Savenkov became its head. He held that senior position for 20 years.

Ivan Savenkov was sure that a teacher, especially a teacher in rural areas (the Russian population of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was predominantly rural), was one of the main social driving forces. He wanted to increase professional standard of would-be teachers and understood the need to shape mentality and organize everyday life of his students. He moulded cognitive activity of his students, monitored their leisure activities, encouraged their healthy life-style; he cultivated in his students cultural performances through stirring up of their interests in literature and arts, development of their aesthetic tastes [Grinina, www].

## Basic Educational Concepts

Ivan Savenkov formulated his basic educational concepts in the book under the title "About the Most Important Duties of a Teacher". It was first published in "The Yeniseysk Eparchial Gazette" and was later reprinted twice as separate editions. Some chapters from the book deserve special attention.

Chapter on attitude towards children contains 74 recommendations such as:

"One of the main duties of a teacher is to protect children from different harmful effects and influences."

"A teacher should not forget that training only in a classroom without developing skills of unsupervised work make children stupid."

"If a child is a lazybones it is the teacher to be blamed in most cases" [Savenkov, 1891].

He recommended his students, would-be teachers, to:

"take care of children correct postural pose when they stand, sit or walk."

"find ways to get information on the state of health of children."

"get to know their moral and physical characteristics and teach children in accordance with these characteristics."

“thoroughly choose books for school libraries and manage children reading habits.”

“take into consideration even peculiarities of what is going on in the locality and local everyday life.”

“not to be angry with children if they do not understand your explanations. When you explain properly they do understand you” [Savenkov, 1891].

Chapter on attitude towards religion contains 36 recommendations. Some of them are as following:

“Religious and moral education is a forefront of formal schooling.”

“Education without upbringing does not provide for mental development of children; does not lead to their receptivity to piety and moral good; does not develop the best qualities of their souls and their inner world.”

“The teacher must struggle against swear words if children use them” [Savenkov, 1892].

Equally useful and practical recommendations about continuing self-evaluation of a teacher could be found in the chapter which contains 45 paragraphs. Some of them are as following:

“Be strict to yourself but do not be stern. Cheerfulness and seriousness should go in a teacher together.”

“Be persistent in acquiring psychological and logical knowledge.”

“Peace of mind is the best sign of maintenance of self-control.”

“True kindness is not too eloquent.”

“A teacher should take care of each word pronounced and each action performed. A teacher should not say spiteful things; backbiting is a kind of bragging.”

“A teacher should teach not only by instructions but by the way he or she behaves towards others. A teacher should be very cautious, watchful and considerate to oneself in front of the children”.

“If you feel children and school is a burden for you it is better to change your profession; do not hurt school and children by your constant discontented mood” [Savenkov, 1891].

## **Teaching Practice**

Teaching practice is one of the aspects of training which is a challenge for teacher’s training colleges and universities even nowadays. What did Ivan Savenkov do? [Berdnikov, 1999, 5-26]. Savenkov made his students prepare synopses of the classes that they were going to conduct. To support a trainee the headmaster was himself present in the classroom during a lesson; after classes together with the students and tutors he discussed all plusses and minuses of the lessons and made careful outcome assessments. Having been inspired by those practical experiences, discussions and conversations with tutors and students Savenkov prepared “Teaching and Educational Training Instruction Manual”. It was the first collection of practical recommendations for trainees, something like a problem book, which compiled the results of research summaries and synthesized several hundred investigations of educational practices by many students and tutors. The manual was published in 1893 and become the pioneer in Russian pedagogical literature.

## **Everyday Life**

Ivan Savenkov understood the importance of being interested in everyday life of his students and the necessity to provide them with all-round training [Voytyuk, 2008, 6-28.].

When Ivan Savenkov was a student himself he was a member of the amateur theatre company and perfect performer. He was sure it was necessary to develop in would-be teachers qualities and skills equal to those necessary for actors and stage performers. In 1887 Savenkov became a co-founder of

“Krasnoyarsk Amateur Theatre Company” and for many years he was its actor and stage director. Krasnoyarsk Teacher’s Seminary students’ involvement in theatrical activities became a fact of their everyday life [Zholudev, 1961, 39-44.]. A man with strong tastes for geography and archeology Ivan Savenkov was a pioneer in ecological education of students of the Seminary. He took his students to walking tours around the town; he regularly organized school trips to the breathtaking rocks and mountains in the vicinity of Krasnoyarsk. The method of teaching by excursions was innovative for Siberia at that period of time. Those trips undertaken by Savenkov together with his students were not only the way to acquire natural knowledge but physical training as well. Ivan Savenkov was sure in the benefits of going in for sports. He himself was good at swimming and gymnastics. That is why he spent time and effort to organise different sporting events for his students. Not only Seminary students were involved into those sporting events. Savenkov promoted among Krasnoyarsk townspeople gymnastics, athletic events and healthy way of life. Mountaineering in the suburbs of Krasnoyarsk, famous for their jaw-dropping lovely landscapes, and visiting local lake resorts became popular among Krasnoyarsk townspeople. Stone tools and traces of ancient people which had been discovered by Savenkov together with his students during the excursions induced him to start excavations. The results of the excavations surpassed all expectations – more than a thousand items had been found buried in the ground. Savenkov was the first to discover the remnants of Paleolithic people in the suburbs of Krasnoyarsk. His research on the ancient rock art images and relics of the past were published in 1912 in the book under the title “The Ancient Fine Arts of the Yeniseysk Province”. It is the only book written by Savenkov which was reprinted in 2012 in Krasnoyarsk. None of Ivan Savenkov’s pedagogical works were published during the Soviet period or after it [Grinina, www].

## Results and Findings

A remarkable individual, Ivan Savenkov was a truly Renaissance man whose educational creativity and civic spirit stand as a timely example to any educator today, when educational challenges continue to make headlines around the world. The educational activities of Ivan Savenkov were effective means of putting his civic stand into practice. The practices applied by Savenkov highly improved learning and student achievement. Educational and cultural advances favoured the development of students of Teacher’s Seminary. He contributed to increasing of the status of local educational establishments and status of a teacher within the local society. In the urban community the teacher which was some kind of the catalyst of many socially useful transformations began to play a prominent role. Thanks to the activity of the teacher the need for cultural pastime among students and townspeople raised dramatically, and educational establishments became not only the places of popularisation of knowledge but also the centres of urban cultural life. It is highly important to study the legacy of the talented educators of the past who were innovators among their contemporaries and whose civic stand and cultural creativity not only influenced but to some extent shaped everyday life of students, their mentality and identity performances as effective educational practices that generally improve learning still constitute one of the majour challenges for educators in various parts of the world.

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## Педагогическое наследие И.Т. Савенкова

**Айснер Лариса Юрьевна**

Кандидат культурологических наук, доцент,  
Красноярский государственный аграрный университет,  
660130, Российская Федерация, Красноярск, просп. Мира, 90;  
e-mail: larisa-ajsner@yandex.ru

**Бершадская Светлана Вячеславовна**

Старший преподаватель,  
Красноярский государственный аграрный университет,  
660049, Российская Федерация, Красноярск, просп. Мира, 90;  
e-mail: bsv97@yandex.ru

### Аннотация

Поиск эффективных образовательных технологий, нацеленных на повышение качества образования остается серьезной педагогической проблемой. В данном контексте историко-педагогические знания очень важны. Задачами истории педагогики и образования являются, в том числе, исследование деятельности талантливых педагогов, которые были новаторами среди своих современников, а также формирование системы знаний о том, что педагоги и педагогика в целом всегда были заметными двигателями культурного и общественного развития. Блестящий выпускник Санкт-Петербургского университета Иван Тимофеевич Савенков, был директором учительской семинарии, готовившей учителей для сельских школ,

одновременно сделался крупным общественным деятелем Красноярска Енисейской Губернии. И.Т. Савенков продолжил традицию русского просветительства, направленную на поиск педагогических решений социальных проблем. И.Т. Савенков утверждал, что учителю, особенно сельскому учителю, недостаточно усвоить принципы воспитательной работы, ему также необходимо вооружиться знанием основных законов природы ребенка, живущего и развивающегося в определенной среде, и уметь применять их в каждом конкретном случае. Процесс образования и воспитания был для И.Т. Савенкова процессом двустороннего взаимодействия. Описания Красноярской учительской семинарии и педагогические труды показывают, что И.Т. Савенков как директор и преподаватель действительно сумел создать в семинарии педагогическую лабораторию, в которой студенты семинарии могли развивать свои познавательные интересы, усваивать знания, учиться самостоятельно мыслить и работать. Учительская семинария стала не только местом популяризации знаний, но и центром культурной жизни горожан Енисейской Губернии.

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#### Ключевые слова

Педагогика, методика преподавания, познавательная деятельность, повседневная жизнь.

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