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Quality of education as a key aspect of problem of socialization control of educational process in general educational establishment

ABSTRACT

In the article the author gives attention to analysis of definitions of quality of education and suggests his own determination. It was found that only upon integration of its key indexes it is possible to speak about quality of education for children and quality of work of educational establishment.

Results of the study of the leading areas of quality of education confirm that quality problems should be settled on three levels – state, region and locally for each general educational institution. The author proposes development and implementation of strategy and tactics of teacher teams on ensuring predictable quality of the educational process as operationally goal. Such a strategy should be built in relation to master aspect of the school. Details of further implementation of the strategy are basing on criteria, parameters, quality technologies and mobilizing efforts of both teachers and students groups.

Key words: *quality of education, educational and educate process, educational establishment, indexes of estimation of quality of education.*

Effectivisation of human activity in all industries, sciences and education is the corner stone of the world civilisation. In education, the recent need for effectivisation was generated by emergence of new value systems, deideologisation of education, crises of previous value systems, which cultivated knowledge instead of a viable and creative person able to enrich his/her knowledge all life long. Current school is functioning under transition from the unified contents of education, syllabi and curricula to their essential variety. Paramount importance of radical reorientation of education in the Ukraine and improvement of its quality is underscored in the *National Doctrine for Educational Development in the Ukraine in the 21st century*.

In particular, it runs that “high quality of education is provided by mutual interaction between education and science, pedagogical theory and practice. Quality criteria and indicators are stipulated by national educational standards” (Natsional'naya doktrina razvitiya, 2002). Introduction of new state standards of complete general secondary education really confirms the national need to assure education quality for the rising generation.

The education quality problems were studied by both domestic and foreign scientists such as M. M. Potashnik (Potashnik, 2000), V. P. Panasiuk (Panasyuk, 2003), G. K. Selevko (Selevko, 1998), P. T. Frolov (Frolov, 1998), I. G. Osadchii (Osadchy, 2009). However, education quality evaluation has not been studied on a comprehensive or universal basis from the point of view of results of school education or personal education.

The present paper is to disclose education quality as a key issue of socialisation of control of the teaching and educational process at a general-education institution.

Pedagogical science and practice associates education quality with such *concepts as education, training, bringing-up, development and management*. In the recent decades, both domestic and foreign scientists have been studying and analysing the definition of *education*, its essence interpretation and quality evaluation. Here are the recognised numerical definitions of *education*: a) an activity involving interaction between teachers and learners; b) the knowledge acquisition process; c) the results of the educational process. In the context of a general educational institution of the 21st century, there may be a different understanding of education: it may denote not only an activity external to the child, but also a process and a result of activity of a child itself. In this case, the earlier concept of *education* (in general) can be replaced with a new concept of *education of a person as a process and a result of personal care, personal responsibility and personal achievements and failures of activity of the learner him/herself in terms of formation, creation and development of his/her own personality and individuality*” (Potashnik, 2000). Put that way, education results in the personality itself and its essential characteristics, which really stipulate personal behaviour. Evaluating education quality, it is necessary to differentiate between the results of school education itself and the results of personal education (Potashnik, 2000).

A local experiment involving over 200 leavers of some particular schools was performed to find out the contribution of self-education in the school education system. The method of questionnaires and pedagogical consultation established that 23 % learners of the total number of respondents acquire extra state standard education by themselves, while 60 % of them do that equally at school and by themselves. These data show learners' reorientation to self-education, development of skills of independent work with different sources of information, increase in responsibility for results of their educational activity.

The educational process in general educational institutions and its quality are predetermined by current educational and pedagogical paradigms. According to T. Kuhn, a scientific paradigm is a system of fundamental scientific achievements / theories / methods patterning the experimental practice in this field of knowledge (Kun, 1997). V. I. Andreev treats a pedagogical paradigm as a usual model, viz. a standard of solution of particular pedagogical problems that goes on functioning though pedagogical science and advanced pedagogical practice have already accumulated the facts challenging the generally recognised theory (Rapatshevich, 2001). The pedagogical science and education of today are under a paradigm shift from *homo sapiens*, i. e. a person having formal knowledge, abilities and skills, to *a person well-trained for vital activities*, i. e. the one working and functioning in an active and creative way, developing oneself; improving oneself in terms of intellect, moral and body. There has been some shift in understanding and implementation of the training accessibility principle, i. e. a requirement to commensurate training with learners' abilities with account of their actual cerebral competence and previous academic training. However, psychology and pedagogy firmly believe that a child can go beyond its actual / attained development only on condition of mobilisation and exertion of all its resources and abilities. It is only under these conditions that a developing effect takes place. The traditional paradigm of didactics runs that concepts are only formed in learners by ascension from *particulars to generals, from empiricals to theoreticals*. V. V. Davidova believes that there may be a more efficient way, viz.: from theoreticals to empiricals, which develops creative thinking in learners (Filosofskiy slovar', 1972). School life experienced a transition from unified pedagogy, intended for an average learner with a deindividuated personality, with pedagogy of learner-centred training and education, i. e. an educational theory of anthropocentrism, which focuses on a child, a learner with his/her psychophysiological features, needs, interests and world views.

The educational paradigm shift, introduction of state standards of complete general secondary education, a 12-year schooling concept, diversification of education in the country make the education quality assurance problem even more aggravated. The semantic meaning of quality is how, which, has certain features. As a term, quality is operated by philosophy and production (Potashnik, 2000). From the philosophical point of view, the world consists not of ready things, but a set of processes during which things continuously appear, change and disappear. Because of the changes, the thing remains precisely this, but not that, qualitatively certain thing by a certain moment. It is qualitative certainty of things and phenomena that makes them stable, distinguishes them from each other and creates an infinite diversity of the world. "Quality is an intrinsic certainty of a thing due to which it is this but not that thing and differs from other things" (Filosofskiy slovar', 1972). At the same time, it is important to bear in mind that the quality of things is not reduced to its particular features. It is connected with a thing as a whole, covers it completely and is inseparable from it. Philosophy considers quality of things as inseparable from their quantity, i. e. certain size, number, volume, behaviour characteristics, feature manifestation degree etc. Every subject is a unity of particular quality and quantity, i. e. a unity of measure. Violation of the measure leads to change in the thing or the phenomenon and its transformation into another thing or phenomenon. Apparently, philosophical understanding of education quality only indicates what distinguishes education from other social phenomena, systems, activities and can be applied to different models of educational practice. E. g., the Montessori education method, the class-and-lesson system or the subject-and-group method provide education of different quality. However, assertion does not convey any evaluation, but just establishes different quality, different features, i. e. it is not evaluative by nature and, consequently, is of no essential practical importance. Interpretation of quality of any goods in terms of production is based on two signs: 1) the goods should have some particular features; 2) the goods should be evaluated not from the manufacturer's, but from the consumer's position (Potashnik, 2000).

The end product of a general educational institution is a school leaver. Therefore, it is rightful that a number of scientists characterise education quality through *school leavers' education quality*. In particular, V. M. Polonskii treats it as a certain level of knowledge and abilities, intellectual, physical and moral *development* achieved by the school leavers of an educational institution according to the training and educational targets (Polonsky, 1995). A positive feature of this education quality interpretation is that it correlates with training targets. At the same time, the author does not support the concept of development with a quality measurement and evaluation method or a knowledge and skill measurement method. Other scientists understand learners' education quality as a certain level of absorption of the syllabi by the learners (knowledge, methods of activity, experience of creative activity, experience of relationship of emotional value), physical, mental, moral and civil development achieved at different stages of the educational process according to individual abilities, aspirations, educational and training targets. It has to be noted that this concept of education quality has a few non-specific expressions, such as *a certain level, according to the training and educational targets*, which need specification. V. P. Panasiuk treats *education quality* as a philosophical category and a pedagogical problem in terms of quality, i. e. a triune science including the quality theory, the quality evaluation theory (qualimetry) and the quality management theory (Panasyuk, 2003). The author defines the quality of school education as a set of features stipulating its ability to achieve social goals in formation and development of a person in such aspects as training, manners, expression of social, mental and physical features (Panasyuk, 2003). A. I. Subetto interprets school *education quality* as a complex category and a multidimensional problem manifesting itself through the category of feature, structure, system, quantity, efficiency, evaluation, management etc. In this light, he treats quality as a set of features, a hierarchical, dynamic, variable system of features manifesting connection and interaction of elements constituting this or that object, the basis of subsistence of an object or a process predetermining specificity, integrity, solidity of an object or a process, a feature of social objects and processes that has value for a person and a society (Subetto, 1987).

Analysing the methodological fundamentals and the essence of the *education quality* concept, we have concluded that *education quality* in the system of other pedagogical concepts is meant as a system characterised by the following signs: a set of features, dynamism, connection and interaction of elements, hierarchy of the system of features, connection with the social environment. The phenomenon of *education quality* complicates management of the quality assurance process. Therefore, it is rightful to study *education quality* management from the perspective of system approach. "The pedagogical system of intraschool education quality management is intended to integrate organisational, methodological, scientific, personnel, administrative and other efforts and resources and involve all structures of school as a pedagogical system to achieve high quality functioning meeting the best practice and standards" (Subetto, 1987).

Educational practice uses the experience of quality management in different social systems, which makes it important, in particular, to clarify the essence of quality management. V. I. Belobragin treats quality management as a purposeful, well-coordinated process of influence on things, tools and machinery, systems and complex systems, teams and individual workers providing achievement of high public quality and its relative solidity (Belobragin, 1976). As for interpretation of the education quality concept in practice, it is traditionally considered as availability of a larger or smaller number of learners whose educational achievements are sufficiently high, i. e. scoring from 7 to 12 according to the new

evaluation system. Other scientists understand education quality as learners' development degree or characterise it with a number of school leavers having entered higher educational institutions, readiness of the school leavers for life, protection of the Motherland, family life etc.

The current standards of ISO 9000:2000 define quality as a set of characteristics of an object demonstrating its ability to meet the established and expected needs. In educational activity, a version of certain needs is represented with state educational standards, which outline the minimum level and volume of the syllabus that the school must provide to its learners. They depict the social mandate of different trade and professional groups to current school and learners' need to implement their personal intellectual and creative potentials (Panasyuk, 2003). In this connection, general educational institutions should be provided with a list of statutory and well-reasoned characteristics, in particular: a school leaver model, an education model, requirements to teacher's qualification and activity, characteristics of educational programmes and curricula etc. In addition, it is necessary to have a proper toolkit evaluating quality of meeting the above-mentioned requirements, i. e. criteria, indicators, scales, qualimetric techniques, procedures and technologies. To evaluate education quality, it is essentially important to disclose three aspects of its structure: the functional aspect is connected with division of quality into features; the substrate aspect demonstrates division of quality by its carriers, viz. teachers, learners, methodologists, programmes and methodological documents etc.; the operational aspect is intended to divide the quality by processes, viz. a set of quality of operations, subprocesses, actions. E. g., quality of academic activities, quality of holding a lesson, quality of methodological work etc. (Panasyuk, 2003).

An educational process involves such a phenomenon as service. According to ISO standards, service is a result of direct interaction between a supplier / contractor and a consumer of the «contractor's internal activity intended to meet the consumer's needs». The main result of the educational process and its most important characteristic is school leaver's erudition, i. e. the school leaver's / education consumer's achievement of the level of particular personal features that meets both requirements of its subsequent improvement and self-realisation and vocational training to the greatest extent. There are also some other opinions of the essence of the education quality concept. They represent education quality as a target to result ratio, as a goal attainment measure, where «the targets / results are only set on an operational basis and predicted in the learner's potential development area» (Potashnik, 2000). Conspicuously, education quality is generally disclosed as a cumulative, complex, systemic, complete characteristic including not only training quality but also the parameters whose contribution allows both raising the training result evaluation, or bring it to naught, or even make negative, however high the evaluation might be if taken alone (Potashnik, 2000).

It is practical to consider the education results fixable with more or less degree of accuracy as submitted by G. K. Selevko (Selevko, 1998). In his opinion, the first education quality sign is knowledge, abilities and skills. In this light, knowledge is considered as field-proven results of cognition of the surrounding world, its adequate presentation in a person's mind. According to the author, the most widespread classifications of knowledge are: a) in terms of localisation — individual, public; b) in terms of a presentation form — signs, words, images, things, procedures; c) in terms of field of knowledge — humanitarian, mathematical, etc.; d) in terms of psychological levels — knowledge, cognizance, reconstruction, comprehension, application, automatic actions, attitude to knowledge, needs; e) in terms of a generalisation extent — facts-phenomena, concepts-time limits, links — regularities, hypotheses — theories, methodological knowledge, appraisal knowledge; f) an association model of individual knowledge.

Abilities are defined as a personal capacity of effective performance of a certain activity on the basis of acquired knowledge under the changed or new conditions. Skills are abilities to perform any actions in an automatic way without any element-to-element control. They are automatic abilities. In terms of the dominating mental processes, skills are classified into mobile / prompt, sensual / sensory and mental / intellectual. This group of education results includes general and particular educational abilities and cognitive activity methods. Personal development indicators are development of intellectual, emotional, volitional, motivational sides of a person, the level of development of his/her cognitive interests and needs; availability of a strong motivation to cognize, the level of child's creativity, its ability to decide everything about itself, be the subject of its own education and development, as well as the extent of moral, physical and environmental components. Negative effects / consequences of education include overload and overfatigue, damage to health, abomination for training, learners' negative life experience.

We share the scientists' point of view that education results can be evaluated in a different way for different subjects, i. e. children, teachers, schools; with different parameters, in different measurements, at different levels, and each time we will deal with different results. In particular, there may be the following gradation:

Group 1 — the education results that can be measured to the absolute or relative extent or in any other measurable terms;

Group 2 — the education results that can only be measured by quality metering, i.e. in a qualitative, descriptive way or in a form of a scale where every score corresponds to a certain manifestation of quality;

Group 3 — the education results resisting easy or explicit detection because they are often invisible and pertain to the learner's innermost emotional experience.

It is always necessary to seek accurate fixation of education results because otherwise it is management that cannot be accurate, but have an alleged and/or approximate nature. It should be noted that it is not only by volume and erudition quality that education quality is stipulated, but also by learners' personal development quality, in particular, spiritual and civic one. That is what its core social value lies in. Therefore, when evaluating education quality, it is necessary to measure meeting of state educational standards / training standards, the level of manners, development and intellectuality. Only under conditions of integration of these parameters can one speak about a child's education quality and educational institution's workmanship.

It is also important to warn against idealisation of the state educational standard when evaluating education quality because the standard cannot but be variable and here-and-now: today it is a *standard* but tomorrow it can turn into an *archaism*. It is explained by objective and continuous modernisation of the syllabus, which is caused by scientific and technical progress and increase in the level of social mandate for literate people.

Pedagogical science and educational practice need development of indicators of learners' education quality at every level of their training, which would be not only an erudition quality criterion, but also an encouragement to increase in quality and employ every person's resources, as well as a psychophysiological and mental potential. If we assume our target as Person, what kind of person should it be? A sack full of good properties or an all-round man able to find his/her own way in the current uneasy and many-sided life? It is clear that we need certain integrated characteristics that can create an abstract image of a school leaver when taken together.

An eligible version of a school leaver model was suggested by pedagogic scientists. It includes well-developed self-consciousness of the person aimed at eternal human values translated into his/her own beliefs and life principles; physical and moral health as harmony of corporal and spiritual development; wide personal erudition showing not only broad knowledge of scientific fundamentals but also continuous self-education, which has become a life-long need and a habit; good manners, intelligence, active non-acceptance of evil, rudeness, banality, falseness; a wish to

live in an honest way; love of the Motherland, social activism, an ability of social creativity (Frolov, 1988). Whatever view of learner's education quality measurement we stuck to, it is an issue of productivity of implementation of the triune training function, viz. educational, instructional and developing, which causes a lot of difficulties in their measurement. In the Ukrainian education system, learners' educational achievements are measured with a 12-mark grading system enabling to establish their levels: 1, 2, 3 marks are regarded as the initial level; 4, 5, 6 as the medium one; 7, 8, 9 as a sufficient achievement; 10, 11, 12 as the high score. Though the 12-mark system of evaluation of learners' educational achievements is more flexible in comparison with the 5-mark one, evaluation of education quality is not immune from subjectivity. It is especially true about quality evaluation of learner's good manners, which manifests itself in an attitude to people, parents, training, duty, responsibility etc. The indicators of learners' manners include the parameters of aesthetic and moral education quality. Development of personal moral qualities is based on understanding and adoption of moral values constituting contemporary universal morals, such as freedom, democratism, dignity, honour, responsibility, conscience, shame, love, kindness, environmental culture, space consciousness, faith, will and charity.

As for personal development quality evaluation, it is necessary to note that even in the presence of corresponding parameters, criteria and technologies; it is difficult and almost impossible to evaluate them without approximate tolerances. The reason is that development of a personality is connected with individual mental processes, his/her emotional and volitional sphere, a state of the central nervous system, which resists *precise measurement*. Analysing education quality components and their evaluation, scientists suggest new global indicators and respective criteria. They take into account "mentality as a global characteristic of world outlook and personal behaviour and (which is slightly more difficult to prove but very important) a wish of more complete personal self-fulfilment on the basis of one's own abilities" (Frolov, 1988).

Education quality is evaluated in the course of training with techniques, methods and technologies of acquisition of objective information available in the current pedagogical arsenal: statistical data and observation data, individual conversations and off-nominal situations, independent expert appraisal and pedagogical consultations, different versions of survey and self-test methods, sociometry and referentometry, psychological tests and diagnostic techniques, business games and dedicated computer software, independent characteristics and individual learners' cards.

It is necessary to note that the overwhelming majority of research papers on education quality problems are focused on quality of the end result of the entire school education cycle, viz. a school leaver as a *product* of pedagogical labour. However, national general educational institutions provide learners with three stages of training, including primary education (1-4 years), basic education (5-10 years) and secondary education (11-12 years). These realities objectively predetermine a necessity to develop an evaluation parameter system, education quality evaluation technologies and criteria at intermediate stages of school educational process: quality of primary education, quality of basic education, quality of secondary education. However, education quality of learners at each training stage depends on effectiveness of the teaching and educational process implemented at a lesson. That is why it is important to evaluate its end result within reasonable bounds by criteria of training, good manners and development of learners. Generally, the following education quality evaluation versions seem possible and reasonable in terms of pedagogy:

- quality of the academic process as the basis of education implemented at a lesson, i.e. a procedural evaluation;
- quality of productivity of the academic process, viz. achievement of intermediate goals and its end result, i. e. training, good manners and development of learners;
- quality of an academic process at a lesson and its result, i. e. a mixed version;
- evaluation of conditions for academic process quality assurance and its productivity, viz. participants of the process and their potentialities, performance of their functions, statutory and methodological framework etc.

Therefore, research of the key aspects of education quality and conditions for its provision carry the inference that this problem is urgent, nation-wide, regional and local for every general educational institution. It can be solved through development and introduction of teaching staff's action strategy and tactics in respect of provision of predicted quality of an academic process as an operationally set target; outlining of the aspect of school activity whose implementation can have a pivotal role in education quality assurance; development of a project of introduction of an education quality system at school and foresight of means of mobilisation of teaching staff's and learners' efforts for its implementation; prescription of parameters, criteria and technologies of analysis of education quality aimed at transfer of the educational institution to a qualitatively new stage of its development. It is suggested to understand education quality as intrinsic certainness of the result of joint pedagogical activity of a teacher, on the one hand, and educational and cognitive activity of learners, on the other hand, at a lesson, the extent of their integration characterised by its end result, viz. the level of personal education, good manners and development.

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