Topical Issues of Personality-Centered Professional Education Quality Management

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Comprehensive and harmonious individual development has always been declared as an educational system objective. At the same time, in the last two decades we have observed a considerable rise of interest to the conception of student individuality in the sphere of the theory of pedagogy. There appeared such pedagogical concepts as «individual development path» which underlines the uniqueness of every life journey and acknowledgement of every individual's singularity. The research conducted in the last decades shows that it is a student's individuality and capabilities that matters more than age and personal background. The individual approach is based on the individual characteristics which include individual orientation, values, expectations, mindset, dominant motives of activity and behaviour.

The pedagogical research and experiments conducted at the beginning of 1990s (programmed education, problem-based learning) caused the appearance of the term «personality-centered education». It involved streaming of students (i.e., strong, average, weak), teaching materials (depending on the level of complexity), requirements concerning the material acquisition, as well as subject differentiation. The appropriate didactic models were developed and a lot of them included the individual approach in teaching.

At the same time pedagogy still recognized the leading role of a teacher in the learning process. In this situation differentiated forms of pedagogical influence defined the content of individual development. However, the subject differentiation determined the standards of cognitive activity taking into account the peculiarities of academic knowledge, but it did not reveal the nature of student's activity as an

Establishment of government system of education quality management is one of the major issues in government educational policy. Priority of personality development also belongs to these major issues. However, existing approaches to management of educational systems cannot provide the implementation of personality-centered education concept. Engineering education quality management systems should be developed not only in the engineering subsystem but also in psychoeducational, organizational, methodological and other subsystems.

owner of individual experience, commitment, preferences in the field of education content, type and form. In other words, the pedagogy that was described as having personality-centered objectives and content, in fact, was not like that at all. It could be seen both in teachers' activity and in federal educational objectives and its improvement trends.

According to A. Pligin, the disregard of spiritual differentiation not only hampered the education system reform but also often caused a formal approach to knowledge acquisition - the gap between remembering the «right» knowledge and using it, the urge to conceal individual values, expectations, mindset and intentions, to replace them with social clichés. He states that in 1990s the term «personality-centered education» entered the practicing teachers' lexicon only as an instinctive separation of accepted approaches and individualization methods used in teaching process from new emerging principles of individual development in education [1].

This is the reason why the first personality-centered education models were often focused on cognitive (intellectual) abilities development. All these models share the following characteristics:

- acknowledgement of education as a primary source of individual development;
- forming an individual with preset abilities;
- understanding development as accumulation of knowledge and skills (adding both to their amount and level of complexity) together with obtaining socially important behaviour patterns;
- classification of individual characteristics, based on presumption that individuality is a product of sociocultural environment;
- defining interiorization as a basic mechanism of learning digestion.

As a result, until recently personality-centered pedagogy has been limited to acknowledgement of inequality of cognitive abilities, which were defined as a complicated mental complex, specified by interrelated genetic, physiological and social factors. Individual abilities were

considered as depending on the capacity to study, which can be defined as ability to digest knowledge. The better was knowledge system organization (theoretically), the stronger was capacity to study. Being dependent on the content and design of teaching materials, capacity to study was considered as a standard individual characteristic (theorists, empiricists, eye-minded, people with verbal-reasoning aptitude, etc.).

This is the reason why we support professor A. Khutorskoj in his belief that lately there has been noted a discrepancy between the new meaning of the term and the old one [2]. Only 10-15 years later the attention brought to the term «personality-centered education» resulted in actual changes of education objectives, tasks, forms and methods as well as in development of appropriate teaching tools. Presently, another approach to understanding personality-centered education has emerged (V. Slastenin, V. Serikov, I. Yakimanskaya, etc.). It is based on acknowledgement of individuality and uniqueness of each person and his/her personal experience.

Individual subjectness is manifested in selectivity of the the reality perception (its content, type and form), steadiness of this selectivity, ways of studying teaching material, emotional attitude towards objects of cognition (material and ideal). Thus, shifting focus from teaching as a strictly regulated process to studying as an individual student activity, its correction and support, is predetermined. At the same time teaching and studying stand together taking into account cognition mechanisms, peculiarities of student's intellectual and behavioural patterns, and relations between a teacher and a student are based on the principles of collaboration and freedom of choice. Herein, education process is not directed from a teacher to a student, but, on the contrary, ways of teaching influence contributing to student development depend on students themselves.

This approach makes students obtain personally and socially important knowledge and skills in connection with actual objects of study. In this situation student's emotional attitude towards

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these objects becomes compulsory. That is why in the framework of personality-centered education the task of professional training changes from planning a universal and compulsory development trajectory to helping each student to develop individually and improve his/her personal abilities using the gained experience.

At the same time, changes in understanding personality-centered education do not mean their all-round implementation. Individual orientation and inner subjectivity of educational conceptions and techniques are poorly developed theoretically and are rarely implemented in teaching practice. According to A. Pligin, an educational system where teaching and studying processes are coordinated still has not been presented adequately in contemporary didactics and teaching practice. Almost all existing educational techniques are still about knowledge and skills, and they do not contribute to student's individual development.

According to V. Leschinskij, practically all research in the sphere of personality-centered education is focused on teaching and educational process and yet the results are never implemented in day-to-day practice. Reviewing the research conducted by I. Yakimanskaya, he notes that «exceeding the bounds of the teaching process is hardly possible, it all comes down to cognitive abilities and, in the context, the common objective is not development of an individual on the whole but of a learning individual («self-realization through learning»)». At the same time, he states that «process» parts of almost all research in the sphere of personality-centered education show that «the concept of personality-centered education is «disseminated», implemented into traditional educational process, where what counts is still obtaining knowledge and studying , not individual development, and this is true for the whole country». So the gap between the research in the sphere of personality-centered education and pedagogical techniques based on the sociohistorical knowledge predetermines the fact that this research is not actually implemented [3].

According to A. Khutorskoj, «alongside with personality-centered education techniques, non-personality-centered ones are actively progressing as well. They include, for example, Unified National Exam, which has to do with economical, political and other issues rather than with students' individual development» [8]. In the sphere of higher professional education this «non-personality-centered» approach is manifested in all-round implementation of testing which was introduced by the government as one of major tools for monitoring higher education quality.

According to V. Leschinskij, predicaments in the sphere of personality-centered techniques implementation are caused by government control of education. In this way, «Russian schools are now moving to profile education strictly regulated by external differentiation and this situation is caused by state management aimed at academic approach in education, and - what is even more important - never aimed at individuality. In these conditions, when assessment is based on traditional approach, it is extremely hard for humanistic education to survive» [3].

Therefore, V. Livshits is absolutely correct stating that «social institutions are considerably behind the actualities of the new century» [4]. E. Kurkin states that in spite of arising tendencies of «regionalization», democratization, and humanization, educational institutions control system in modern Russia preserved its traditional features of multilevel, centralized and bureaucratic organization... This system is a huge break on progress and, particularly, for personality-centered education development» [5].

We presume that this is the reason why the advantages of personality-centered education have not yet been used in development of up-to-date professional training quality management systems. Moreover, the direct transfer of successful quality management systems (oriented on the finished product quality standard) into the education sphere resulted in the "technologization of production of specialists", whose professional training quality is defined by the licensing and accreditation results

(i.e., in case the HEI does not complete research work for 1.5 mln roubles per year, or a student completing a test fails to identify the author of a famous quotation, the education quality of this HEI will be considered low). That is why nowadays we can observe the gap between the personal approach development in professional training (characterized by such concepts as creativity, self-realization, etc.) and the development of education quality management systems (characterized by such concepts as standardization, testing, etc.).

Erich Fromm's antithesis "to have or to be" proves this contradiction. Here, the paradigm "to have" in education is common in the situation when the education is "given" and there is a corresponding "giving" pedagogy: a teacher "gives", students "take" and, therefore, "have" this very education. The results of this strategy are far from perfect – students grow up to be dependent consumers and tend to say "I was not given the proper education".

At the first gaze, even the first principle of the ISO 9000:2000 Standard has the same meaning: higher education must "give" the professional training which is specified by consumers in a shape of an "order" or a model. As a result, contemporary educational systems tend to evaluate the outcomes with the help of certain unified requirements or standards. And such concepts as "educational service", "satisfaction of customer's needs", "quality of rendered services" just move the conception of education quality closer to the "to have" paradigm.

The paradigm "to be" brings up the opposite meaning in the sphere of education. To be means to act without waiting for someone to come and give you the knowledge and skills you need. This approach implies the presence of efficient reference points, competence-centered content, and the use of heuristic angle in education.

That is why the realization of developments made in the sphere of personality-centered education in contemporary education quality management systems is hampered by the fact that its effect cannot be expressed in traditional dimension of knowledge and skills just
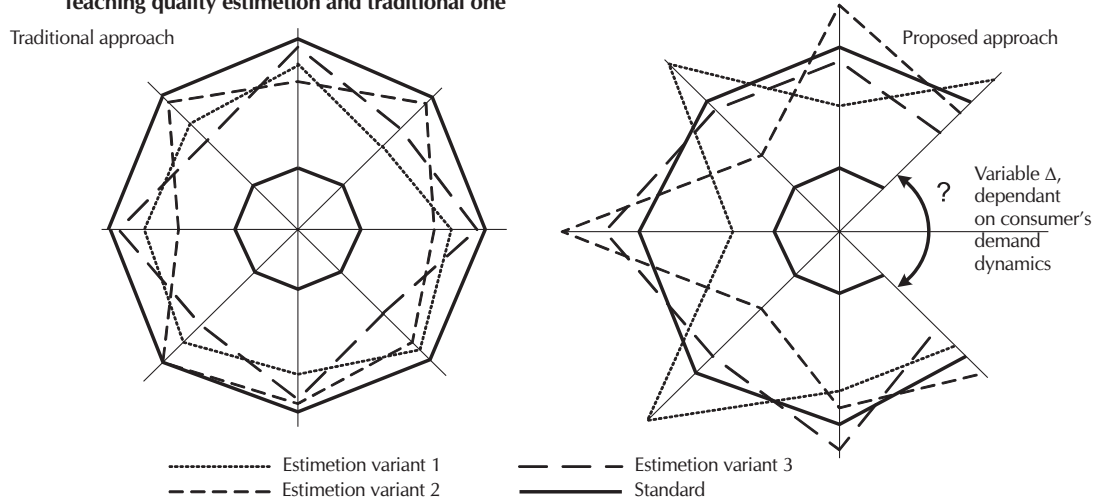
by adding graduates individual characteristics (V. Leschinskij notes that "the thing is not even about the complexity or even impossibility of measuring individual characteristics. The thing is that sometimes it is not even necessary" [3]).

On the other hand, however, we presume that it is personality-centered education that can provide the professional training quality required by "consumers". It is clear that the starting point of personality-centered education is not a pursuit of certain professional training results but rather development of individual cognitive abilities of every student and establishment of teaching process required for it. But we have to admit that contemporary "consumers" demands go in this very direction in today's social and economical framework. And it is personality-centered education that can provide the required intuitive thinking that helps to operate effectively in the new environment and in unconventional situations. It is personality-centered education that counts necessary socially important knowledge and skills and evaluates student's individual characteristics in the first place. Here the key competences are oriented to assist a student in entering society and operating successfully in it.

"Consumers" are interested in creative individuality able to adapt to changing social and economical conditions. However, education management systematization aimed at satisfaction of consumer's needs strives for achieving this result not with the help of personality-centered education implementation, but with the help of formalization of "finished product" quality standards and "technologization" of professional training process. I. Zimnyaya underlines the need to solve this contradiction: "Education strategies polarize around its two features: manageability and training students to accumulate knowledge without assistance. It is clear that presently none of the strategies exists per se, instead, they interpenetrate" [9].

As a result, the engineering higher education quality management is presently a topical issue. This situation complies with today's government educational policy with its priorities lying in establishment of education quality assessment state system and

Fig. 1.
**Differences beturen the proposed method of professional
feaching quality estimetion and traditional one**

Traditional approach

Proposed approach

Variable Δ,
dependant
on consumer's
demand
dynamics

·················· Estimetion variant 1   — — — Estimetion variant 3
– – – – Estimetion variant 2   —— Standard

personality development. That is why up-to-date research should be focused on solving the contradiction between the new content and the old form, between personality-centered education and technologization of its quality management.

All elements of educational process should participate in achieving this goal, as the educational content update will not bring the required results without changing other elements as well. According to I. Yakimanskaya, to establish a model of personality-centered education it is necessary to apply system approach, embracing all education levels [10]. Therefore, we cannot but agree with V. Leschinskij on his opinion that personality-centered education "should go for such ways of "incorporation" with traditional education which could allow them to coexist, and even more, to achieve good results in study and ensure individual development (self-development)" [3]. He gives us an example of Borton's three-phased development model which is all about approaching to students as individuals, giving them a push, motivating them "as human beings" and still teach them in traditional systematic manner.

At the same time, we believe that personality-centered education cannot be "incorporated" or "embedded". New technologies are effective not when they are incorporated in the existing educational system but when they enter the new educational system as an integral element. This is all about educational process modernization on the whole, not just particular technical decisions. Higher education pedagogical issues should be addressed in the framework of professional training management systematization [11]. Such an approach to solution of the contradiction between technologization of professional training quality management and personality-centered education can lead to a transfer from struggle of opposites to cooperation, thus, creating a mutual enrichment effect - synergy.

Our research [12] is an attempt to systematize the elements of professional training quality management in order to ensure such an educational outcome as individual development. Knowledge and skills still are considered to be of great importance but as a means of goal achievement, not as a goal itself. And this goal is a thorough professional training of graduates.

At this point we support suggestion of the group of authors of Bauman Moscow State Technical University [13] to use the principle of pentagonal content structuring in designing systemic changes in educational content. According to this principle, all goals and means of their achievement, quality standards and estimated figures should be structured in a pentagonal format.

In case of using this approach the maximum attention should be paid to the student's abilities and individual features, thus, the educational process must be based on continuous feedback. That is why one of major issues of our research is development of system for evaluation of graduates' readiness for further professional activity. Presently, there still remains a discrepancy between professional training quality evaluation criteria in the industrial sphere (where the main criterion is the ability to solve professional tasks) and in the educational institutions (where the main criterion is the level of accumulated knowledge and skills). Our research is an attempt to establish a unified plausible method arranging the existing evaluation methods and coordinating them with the innovative techniques which meet the requirements of educational service consumers.

The difference between the method of evaluation of graduates' readiness for professional activity and the traditional one is that the former allows and motivates a student to strive for self-improvement continuously and without trying to reach some certain model of a specialist. Besides, the amount of directions can be changed in order to reflect the trends of needs (for example, "consumer" needs). All these factors add to the difference between the proposed method and the traditional model of a specialist (see Figure 1).

The principal differences between the proposed method of evaluation of graduates' readiness for professional activity and the traditional one are the following:

– shifting the emphasis from professionally important knowledge and skills to the ability to use them in practice;

– integration of university traditions and "customer" needs in graduates' education quality evaluation.

On the whole, the method of evaluation of graduates' readiness for professional activity allows to:

- consider objective necessities of graduates' readiness for professional activity in a dynamic and plausible way;
- evaluate them sufficiently and clearly;
- characterize them comprehensively;
- use different combinations of incentives in order to provide the required motivational pattern;
- bring up the required potential incentives in order to promote student's outcomes;
- strengthen students' motivation for reaching short- and long-term goals;
- avoid both students' outcomes equalization and branding students as "capable" or "narrow-minded" ones;
- use all the advantages of students' lifestyle to increase their readiness for further professional activity;
- complete the set of existing professional training quality characteristics and arrange the professional training quality evaluation criteria;
- correct flexibly of the evaluation elements depending on the internal and external environment changes;
- use it in the shape of electronic worksheets providing the required systemacy of implementation in different university departments.

So, the research shows that government educational policy with its priorities lying in establishment of education quality assessment state system and personality development provides for further development of engineering education quality management systems, aimed at solving the contradiction between the new content and the old form, between personality-centered education and technologization of its quality management.

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It is also necessary to take into account that modernization of professional training quality management systems can ensure the system approach to implementation of personality-centered education. Therefore, we cannot abandon the results of research in the field of management, including the new version of international ISO Standards. But implementation of these principles in the educational system must concern not only the techniques, but also psychoeducational, organizational, methodological and other subsystems. At the same time implementation of personality-centered education cannot be restricted to the pedagogical subsystem, it should change the management system, required managers' qualifications, approaches to evaluation of HEI's officials activity and HEI's activity on the whole, stimulation system, etc.

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