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Testing: What Kind of Education Should be in Ukraine?

To date, there has been sweeping progress in science and technology. Ubiquitous globalization supersedes almost any specific forms, models of individual manifestations and original social formations. The achievements of one country gain world recognition and become open to public. In this situation, the education system should not lag behind. Therefore, more and more advanced educational programs, new assessment systems are being created.

What is the essence of education? Education is a social progress (and the result) of the constant transfer of knowledge and experience, the formation and becoming of personality in accordance with its inherent biological, psychological and personal qualities in the process of its active social development [1, p. 290].

The large scale of education, achieved in the 20th century, influenced the change in the tasks and functions of the education system, changed its paradigm. One of the innovations of modern education was testing as a tool for assessing learning outcomes, which was finally formed in the first half of the 20th century. Its most successful implementation was realized in the education systems of Western countries. American psychologist E. Thorndike identifies 3 stages of introducing testing into practice of the American school, according to which 1931 was the beginning of the modern stage of school testing development [2]. This time was the beginning of the process of ubiquitous introduction of tests not only in the primary and secondary, but also in higher education. In evaluating the testing system itself, as an example, one can take the most popular classification of tests, according to which there are tests of closed and open types. In closed-type tests, each question is accompanied by ready-made variants of answers, from which it is necessary to select 1 or more correct answers. Open-type tests are distinguished by the fact that here for each question the examinee has to offer his/her own answer: to add a word, a phrase, a sentence, a sign, a formula etc [3]. In closed-type tests, the possible answers are as follows: alternative answers (yes or no answer); correspondence (the examinee is asked to restore the correspondence of the elements of the two lists); multiple choice; elimination of a distractor; sequence.

In open-type tests, the following answers are distinguished: supplement (the examinee should formulate answers in view of the restrictions provided for in the assignment) and free statement (the examinee should independently formulate the answers, because no restrictions are imposed on them in the assignment) [4].

Testing is really a very convenient form of assessing the acquired knowledge. A huge amount of material is reduced to a simpler and more convenient number of key verification competencies. A very useful consequence of creating tests is the processing by scientists, specialists in their fields of all the accumulated knowledge from a period of deep antiquity. There is a general standardization and, in fact, a summation of the experience of mankind.

It should be noted that testing is a pragmatic and rational approach to assessing students' knowledge. With the large scale of people receiving education, there is a problem of the same qualitative and rapid assessment, as before. And the testing system solves this problem, at first glance. However, as a result, educational institutions receive narrow-focused specialists, who lack an outlook. In addition, modern graduates do not have the skills of conscious goal-setting. In some countries (for example, Russia), a Unified State Exam (ЕГЭ) has been introduced, which, in our opinion, narrows the range of knowledge gained, bringing training closer to narrowly pragmatic goals [5, p.61].

Mass introduction of tests in Ukrainian schools, in our opinion, was a mistake for our nation. An Independent External Evaluation (ЗНО), like ЕГЭ, provokes to put efforts only in necessary subjects. The testing system has its own sphere of application. For example, it is suitable for people with fast associative memory. This form of assessment programs a person to memorize correspondences, to memorize numbers and small data related to them. Meanwhile, quantitative knowledge is often not involved in the narrow profile of the work. Tests of closed type (with alternative answers) are very generalized. When using these tests as an assessment tool, it is impossible to understand the real depth of knowledge and the state of thinking of a person. The probability of guessing is 50%, because the student has two choices: "yes" or "not".

Tests of closed type of a variant of correspondence estimate ability of knowledge selection by different categories, sequence of thinking and knowledge from a specific area. But again attention focuses more on the chronological and associative aspect, on the ability to compare, but not to understand or be conscious of this knowledge. Tests of closed type of a variant of excess elimination contain an extra variant of the answer, which provokes the danger of memorizing incorrect answers. Instead of concentrating attention on real knowledge, such tests confuse the student.

Open-type tests are much more informative, because they provide more wittings not only about the results of mastering students' knowledge, but about the work of their consciousness, thinking and character traits. Formulation of the student's answers in open-type assignments can tell a lot and direct the student in the right direction to reveal his capabilities. At the same time, closed-type assignments serve as a destructive force for the student's thinking and energy. In this case, he is deprived to demonstrate his skills, abilities and potential. William James thought:

“the most important property of human nature is an irresistible desire to be appreciated” [6, p.26]. Dale Carnegie in his book “How to win friends and influence people” notes that “the desire to feel one’s own importance is one of the main differences between a person and an animal” [6, p.26]. Everyone needs space to discover their own lights, inclinations, knowledge, skills and abilities. Closed-type assignments cannot provide this capability. Many students lose the motivation to understand and realize at the very beginning of such assignments. They subconsciously collide with the fact of the already formed compulsory answers, quickly getting used to the fact that understanding and comprehension are not tested and are not a criterion of learning. As a result, the majority are demotivated to get education. In today’s increasingly competitive world, Ukraine must take care of its nation. The proof of importance of investing funds and efforts in education can be as follows: according to UN experts, 1/3 of the differences in the socio-economic potential of developed and developing countries are explained by differences in economic models, and 2/3 – by differences in the level of education [2, p.290].

To resolve this situation, we need to significantly narrow the application of testing in the Ukrainian education system. First, it is necessary to abandon all types of test assignments at the level of primary and secondary education, since the foundation of the personality is laid and formed in the school, and also to cancel the Independent External Evaluation (ЗНО) and introduce a new assessment system developed in accordance with the national specifics of education. The new assessment system must be based on assignments that require an individual response from each pupil, which implies the need to include open-type tests of the free statement. Secondly, closed-type tests can be used as one of the types of assessment of final control in small numbers or modular work of technical specialties in universities. At the same time, students of technical specialties must fully explain the logic of solving the problem, demonstrating the course of thinking and conscious knowledge.

Thus, the model of the development of consciousness and awareness of getting education must become the defining one for Ukraine.

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