

**Kurylo V. S.**

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN UKRAINE: PROBLEM STATEMENT AND  
WAYS TO ADDRESS IT**

Professional discussion about the quality of education has been on the horizon for a long time. Despite the efforts of scholars, the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, higher educational establishments, and scores of secondary school teachers, we remain unable to provide graduates with the minimum of knowledge and skills, as well as with the experience of their implementation, required by the state standard.

Such state of affairs may well be justified by underfunding, constant revisions of the content of education, innovations, which are not always successful. On the other hand, with new momentum given to the society by scientific and technological advance and global changes in the world, these factors alone cannot account for the low quality of education and the unpreparedness of the young generation to life and professional activities.

Today, further development of our country is directly related to the quality of education, which requires comprehensive answers to the following questions: what is the quality of education? how shall we measure it? what means and instruments shall be used to ensure that the quality of professional training correlates with the demands of the person, state, society, and employers? The concept of the quality of education remains polemical. Scholars equate it with the quality of teaching, quality of educational establishment operations, person's knowledge and social training, the quality of educational process, and compliance with the requirements set in the social and professional environment. All these issues require an accelerated, but pedagogically sound resolution.

In Europe and the USA, the case of the quality of education is being actively

declared and discussed since the 1970s. Since then, European countries, especially the members of the Bologna Process, not only held dozens of conferences, seminars, symposiums, but were able to work out effective mechanisms and instruments, develop normative base to ensure and assess the quality of education, as well as founded a net of official and civic organizations aimed to control this sphere. In these countries, the quality of education is managed by public authorities, educational establishments, civic organizations, and labor unions. Such approach provides for the evaluation of the quality of education, its potential and the compliance between the content of education and the requirements of the labor market and an individual person's ambition of self-realization in the society.

Frankly speaking, the problem of the quality of education in Ukraine, despite its constant presence on the agenda for the last 10 years, has not been solved yet. There are about 300 universities in Ukraine, whereas the number of authoritative scientific and practical conferences dedicated to the quality of education management varies between one and two conferences per year. It was only in 2011, that the National Framework of Qualifications was instituted, though the discussions on its role in the determination of learning outcomes and the necessity of its development began seven years ago. Unfortunately, the scholars who study the problem of the quality of education focus exclusively on the quality of learning outcomes, these results often being irrelevant to the development of the graduate as a whole, his/her intellectual, emotional, voluntary, and motivational spheres.

Virtually none of the aspects of the quality of education is fully defined. For example, the External Independent Evaluation was to create a system of the unbiased assessment of the secondary school learning outcomes and the effective selection of the best students for higher educational establishments. These measures were expected to create the basis for the quality of higher education. The analysis by the Ukrainian Center for Educational Quality Assessment revealed inadequate preparation of graduates in mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology. About 9% of the participants failed to get a passing grade, and about 21% of the students were able to reach only the 140 threshold. These figures will translate in the future into

substandard quality of professional preparation of doctors, engineers, technologists, and specialists in fundamental areas of knowledge. Such regions as Zakarpattia, Chernivtsi, and Kherson demonstrate consistently low scores in the most of academic disciplines tested during the External Independent Evaluation. These data are well known, but no one, however, has undertaken any measures to improve the quality of education.

It is my considered opinion that the quality of education should be discussed from three perspectives. First of all, a national program, on the basis of the National Strategy for the Development of Education, is to be developed in Ukraine in order to ensure the quality of education at all educational levels. Such program should contain concrete tasks and be able to define steps to improve the quality of education, as well as identify stakeholders, deadlines, and funding sources. Government, higher and secondary educational institutions are not the only concerned in the quality of education. Parents, employers, civic organizations, various ministries, higher educational establishments, comprehensive schools, and students should also be encouraged to advance the cause of the quality of education.

The second standpoint to address the quality of education is to admit that the management of educational quality is within the realm of pedagogy. Today, the quality of education is generally believed to belong solely to educational management, an approach adopted in Western countries. However, the research into the best practices of the developed countries conducted by Russian and Ukrainian scholars, including the scholars of the university led by me, proves otherwise. Efforts to resolve this problem by means of administrative and organizational measures neither improve the quality of training of prospective specialists, nor make them more competitive in our country and abroad. The employment of ISO Standards for educational quality management is criticized by Western countries: they are valuable in terms of management, but need to be adopted to education. Meanwhile, those universities that employ scientifically substantiated, tried and tested approaches to the quality of education management do succeed in raising the quality of education. All this goes to prove that the development of the program aimed to improve the quality

of education in Ukraine should be based on the research findings obtained in the context of the projects financed by the state budget. I am sure that such projects are already underway in the universities and research centers of Ukraine. There is no doubt that these research projects should be expanded and their findings generalized and studied, serving as the basis for the realization of a range of pilot projects funded the government. This will make the program of the improvement of the quality of education clear and viable.

Finally, there needs to be mentioned the third position from which to view the quality of education. It is obvious that the key player within the realm of all educational innovations, including the search for the ways to solve the problem of the quality of education, is the teacher. Education, first and foremost, is a spiritual sphere. And in the spiritual sphere, one cannot change something in others, if he/she does not possess it him/herself. For this reason, it is the teacher who should be concerned with the improvement of the quality of education in the first instance. A particular attention is to be given to the competence of the teacher, his/her ability to use innovative pedagogical techniques, effectively interact with pupils, students, and to manage educational process taking into account the changes occurring in the social life.

Notwithstanding the aforesaid, we should remember the key point: whatever we do, we do it for the sake of our students. Education is a sphere where the end result cannot be the justification of the means. We should always ask a question: does our educational system save the psychological health of our students and what is the cost of the quality of education obtained?

Doubtlessly, all these aspects are to be thoroughly studied and analyzed. But there is something we know for sure: we should not delay the solving of the problem of the quality of education. And, in my opinion, the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine should take the lead in advancing this cause.

## **Курило В. С. Якість освіти в Україні: постановка проблеми та шляхи її вирішення**

Статтю присвячено вивченню проблем якості освіти, виявленню причин невідповідності набутих студентом знань і навичок із державним стандартом. Обговорено чинники, які заважають вирішенню цього питання, а також наведено досвід країн Європи та Сполучених Штатів Америки. Особливу увагу приділено огляду науково-практичних конференцій, присвячених проблемам управління якістю освіти, виявленню недоліків та упущень. Доведено, що результати конференцій не співвідносяться з цілісним розвитком особистості випускника, його інтелектуальною, емоційною, волевою, мотиваційною сферою. Показником недосконалості якості освіти в Україні запропоновано статистичні дані результатів складання ЗНО. Автором виділено три площини вирішення цієї проблеми: 1) створення на базі Національної доктрини розвитку освіти державної програми із забезпечення якості на всіх рівнях системи освіти; 2) використання апробованих результатів з управління якістю освіти, наближення теоретичних знань до практики; 3) підвищення кваліфікації педагогів. Автор наголошує на негайності вирішення цих питань для подальшого розвитку нашої країни.

*Ключові слова:* якість освіти, компетентність педагога, управління якістю освіти.

## **Курило В. С. Качество образования в Украине: постановка проблемы и пути ее решения**

Статья посвящена изучению проблем качества образования, выявлению причин несоответствия полученных студентом знаний и навыков и государственного стандарта. Обговорены факторы, которые мешают решению этого вопроса, а также приведены опыт стран Европы и Соединенных Штатов Америки. Особое внимание уделено анализу научно-практических конференций, посвященных проблемам управления качеством образования,

выявлению недостатков и упущений. Доказано, что результаты конференций не соотносятся с целостным развитием личности выпускника, его интеллектуальной, эмоциональной, волевой, мотивационной сферой. В качестве показателя несовершенства качества образования в Украине приведены статистические данные результатов сдачи ВНО. Автором предложено три плоскости решения этой проблемы: 1) создание на базе Национальной доктрины развития образования государственной программы по обеспечению качества на всех уровнях системы образования; 2) использование апробированных результатов по управлению качеством образования, приближение теоретических знаний к практике; 3) повышение квалификации педагогов. Автор отмечает неотложности решения этих вопросов для дальнейшего развития нашей страны.

*Ключевые слова:* качество образования, компетентность педагога, управления качеством образования.

### **Kurylo V. S. Quality of Education in Ukraine: Problem Statement and Ways to Address it**

The article is devoted to the study of the issues related to the quality of education. It discusses the reasons why the knowledge and skills obtained by university students appear to be inadequate to the state standard. The factors that impede the solution of this problem, as well as the best practices of European countries and the United States in this area are explored.

Special attention is given to the review of the scientific and practical conferences dedicated to the quality of education management, tracing its faults and omissions. It has been proven that the results of the conferences fail to address the comprehensive development of the graduate, his/her intelligence, emotions, will, and motives. Statistical data gathered on the basis of the External Independent Evaluation of secondary school graduates are offered as the evidence of the inadequate quality of education in Ukraine. The author proposes three dimensions to resolve this problem: 1) to develop on the basis of the National Strategy for the Development of Education

a state program ensuring the quality of education at all levels of education, 2) to use the best practices in the area of the quality of education, to bring theory closer to practice, and 3) to ensure continuing education and training of teachers. The author emphasizes the necessity to resolve these problems immediately in order to safeguard the further development of Ukraine.

*Key words:* quality of education, teacher's competence, quality of education management.

*Peer review: G. Hagerty*

*The article was received by the Editorial Office on 08.04.2013*

*The article was put into print on 26.04.2013*