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Cultural and historical correlations of ideal education and human paradigm

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Abstract

The article describes main educational paradigms developed in different historical periods: antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment and the Modern Age. It is shown that anthropocentrism is in the forefront of all philosophical works. In the present article we review different points of view on the ideal men described by famous philosophers, since the final objective of education is getting an ideal man, make him better. It is proved that intellectual experience of the past is quite useful nowadays for settling issues of modern education, since it allows for deeper understanding of the essence of what is happening now and what has happened in the field of education throughout history.

It was concluded that the present model of education includes all educational practices that once existed in history. It is found that at present one of the reasons of systemic crisis in education is confrontation and competition of different educational models. Thus, it is necessary to determine a harmonic combination and interaction of different educational paradigms.

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1. Introduction

“Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learnt in school”. This has been assumed by A. Einstein, the same has been assumed by philosophers over the course of history and currently this idea has not lost its significance.

A man is almost always given in the process of learning: upbringing in the family, education at school, University and continuous getting knowledge from others and acquiring life experience, thus, from this perspective it is difficult to overestimate the contribution of education and process of cognition in the quality of human life, in the destiny as a whole.

Whereas the content of education is changing, its forms are being changed as well; the necessity of education is preserved in different historical epochs. Most likely, a single educational model was applicable throughout the history

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but depending on human objectives and challenges it varied and developed differently in certain time periods. Currently in pedagogic practice the situation is such that all educational models, which once existed in history, are available at the same time. At that these educational models confront and compete with each other rather frequently, being, in such a way, the reason for systemic crisis. In view of the above it is relevant to review the history of origin, development and functioning of different educational models and identify the ways of their possible combination in the current context.

2. Historical Background

In science philosophy the concept of a “paradigm” has been introduced by G. Bergman, German philosopher-positivist, to describe normative methodology of education and science (Shakabara, 2006). This concept has been further popularized due to work of T. Kuhn, American philosopher and historian of science. Working out the model of education and science development T. Kuhn has drawn a conclusion that the activity of community of practitioners is ruled by established traditions or paradigms, which can be reconstructed and one can determine the mechanism of their reconstruction. A paradigm by T. Kuhn is “universally recognized scientific achievements that, for a time, provide model problems and solutions for a community of practitioners” (Kuhn, 1975).

Among Russian scientists the concept of a paradigm has been studied by philosophers and representatives of methodology of scientific knowledge: M.A. Mostepanenko, V.V. Nalimov, A.I. Rakitin, M.A. Rozov, V.S. Stepin, V.S. Shvyryov, Yu.V. Yakovetz and others. The paradigm is used by them mostly under development of scientific rationality. Paradigm, reflecting some established and repeated in different situations cognitive signs of theoretical structures, first and foremost, represents this knowledge and is used by V.I. Kuznetsov for the “analysis of not knowledge systems themselves, but their functioning in a community of practitioners” (Kuznetsov, 1997).

Main items of educational paradigm are: 1) nature and objective of education; 2) attitude of a teacher to a disciple and his position in educational process; 3) concept of human-forming functions of education (humanitarian, culture-forming, socializing function); 4) content of education (axiological, cognitive, activity-creative, personal components); 5) pedagogic technologies of education (Bondarevskaya, 1997).

3. Educational models from antiquity to the Modern Age

The basis of all currently existing pedagogical trends and ways is some philosophical idea on the ideal man, on how it is necessary to influence on a man to make him better via upbringing and education. The final objective of education is to get an ideal man. Philosophical understanding of a man made great impact on the development of education.

At all times the objective of education was such an impact on a child, which will help to get independence for completing a mission by a man on earth. Missions and objectives of men on earth are different, and then educational purposes are different as well. In other words, “each historical cycle forms own problems of upbringing and education of a personality, finds corresponding methods and solutions, determines ways and directions of engaging into knowledge, adoption available skills, ability to translate and apply them in practice” (Romanenko, 2002). Philosophers of antiquity, the Middle Ages, Modern Age, and Enlightenment speculated on what nature of a human is, who the human shall be, whether he is capable of changing under the influence of education, inevitably turning their attention towards education. Their philosophical ideas on upbringing, enlightenment and image of a human became the basis for the whole set of educational systems.

The essence of ancient educational model is the combination of two cognitive methods – intuition and discourse. “The initial method of perception of the beginning of the world in pre-Socratic philosophy was intuition as a focused contemplation of essence of existence, in the act of which the contemplator equals to contemplation. To transfer the result of intuitive perception of the truth to another human being it was necessary to create special conditions. It was necessary to develop perception and reveal the possibility to see the world via symbolic structures for a disciple to have the sought for intuition. Traditionally a myth served for these purposes; thus initial attachment to philosophical knowledge started from studying myths” (Romanenko, 2001). It is known that all areas of knowledge take their origin from myths: medicine, philosophy, art, and upbringing.

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