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Some problems of higher education under modern economic conditions

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There are a lot of problems connected with higher education in Russia nowadays. One of them is the future employment of graduates. The employment problem made higher educational establishments revise their total system, curriculum; the system of education is developing towards the collaboration with labor market. Teaching of a foreign language is one of the advantages for educational establishments, and knowing a foreign language is the benefit for graduates in the future employment. In the modern economic situation our society seeks for highly qualified specialists, having deep knowledge in their profession but possessing a range of additional skills which are necessary for getting a well-paid job. The competitiveness of graduates becomes the key factor in the modern educational process.

Key words: higher education, labor market, teaching a foreign language, collaboration, motivation, suppliers, consumers, competitiveness, graduates, profession.

О некоторых проблемах высшей школы в условиях современной экономической ситуации

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В настоящее время существует множество проблем, связанных с высшим образованием в России. Одной из проблем является трудоустройство выпускников. Проблема трудоустройства вынудила высшие учебные заведения пересмотреть полностью свою систему работы, программы; теперь система образования развивается по направлению сотрудничества с рынком труда. Обучение иностранному языку в высшем учебном заведении является преимуществом для вуза и выпускников при последующем трудоустройстве. Современное экономическое общество ищет квалифицированных специалистов, обладающих хорошими знаниями в своей профессии, но и имеющих дополнительные навыки и умения, что является крайне важным для получения высокооплачиваемой работы. Конкурентоспособность выпускников становится ключевым фактором в современном образовательном процессе.

Ключевые слова: высшее образование, рынок труда, обучение иностранному языку, сотрудничество, мотивация, поставщики, потребители, конкурентоспособность, выпускники, профессия.

The global economic crisis provokes all the spheres of life to conform to its conditions. Higher education has not become an exception. The system of higher education is closely connected with economics, i.e. labor market annually receives new graduates, who face the problem of employment. An employment problem makes graduates, higher education establishments revise total system, curriculum. The system of education is developing towards the collaboration with labor market. Labor market in the new reality appears to be in a difficult

position as well. If ten years ago labor demand was in law, management, marketing specialists, nowadays it is in engineers, professionals in applied sciences, particularly economic spheres.

There must be a close collaboration between labor market and educational establishments. Newman, himself concedes: "If . . . a practical end must be assigned to a University, . . . it is that of training good members of society" (1). Why so many people can't find a job they want, according to their specialization? How to avoid this situation? Whose responsibility is to predict the situation on the labor and educational market? How to be in need after graduation? All these questions can be asked every day? Undoubtedly, it is very difficult to solve this complex problem.

In a small research that I conducted among the final year students from different faculties, where the students were asked to evaluate the current situation in our Institute and their level of preparation to leave the institute and look for a job. The following questions were asked: How can you evaluate the process of education and your level of preparation for the future profession? What do you think about the labor market demand in our country? What do you think about the labor market demand abroad? Is your profession unique in some kind and will be in demand on the labor market?

As a result the most part (60%) of students have answered that they are not well prepared for the future profession because of the poor material and educational base, but nevertheless they hope that there would be a possibility of finding a good job even at start due to the rarity of this kind of specialists. Despite the global economic crisis 30 % of undergraduates supposed that to find a job abroad would be easier than to do it on their native land.

There is nothing new in the data obtained. If the members of labor market (companies, industries) participated in the educational process of universities, institutes, colleges, gave opportunities to practice more, had mutual exchange, theoretical and practical, increased motivation, the problem of poor preparation and the fear of future life in the profession would not be so sharp. According to Yao L.M. (2)

"The problems of higher education in modern Russian society", the system of higher education in modern Russian society as the factor of cultural reproduction experiences great difficulties, connected with the contradiction between educational service suppliers and consumers. In order to mitigate this contradiction, higher education establishment managers, as the educational service suppliers, and managers of businesses as educational service consumers should revise their relations or start new ones. Having a strong management and a strong rapport (3) between them can help in beating the competition among educational establishments, big business and labor market that in future will appear to be very important in choosing where to study for future entrants.

At present moment higher educational establishment management relies on entrants demand, but ignores labor market demand. This problem will result in mass non-competitive specialist graduation with humanitarian education mostly, in comparison with engineers and as a result, it will lead to competitiveness decrease of the universities (4).

In this difficult period of time the possibility of state-private partnership on the labor market becomes more obvious. It is beneficial for both parties: for the state, as educational establishments are state-owned, and private recruiting agencies (as recruiting business is in a bad condition as well). Now it is necessary to change competition for partnership, define all its terms and conditions according to the law, share the information about new vacancies, big projects. The state must require recruiting agencies to give quality assurance, certification and control their work. The state must supervise the supply of labor migrants and their employment in order to follow the priority of Russian citizens, including young specialists even just after graduation (5).

When we are speaking about the ways of improving the system of higher education, we have to consider a foreign language as one of the extra things that can be used as one of this ways. When a future student is thinking where to go to study or his parents are making this choice for him, and they probably consider possible future employment, they certainly understand that the opportunity to know a foreign language can become an advantage for the future employment. Hence the educational establishments that give such an opportunity become more competitive. The more educational programs a university has, the more competitive it is.

The tradition of teaching a foreign language in our country has absolutely changed recently. In the end of 20th century and the beginning of 21st methodological revolution in teaching English took place in Russia. Before, the main aspects of teaching were supposed to be grammar, translation using dictionary, reading. It should be noted that those principles of “old school” have made a strong basis in foreign language knowledge of people. The conversion of ordinary boring exercises into an exciting work depended only on the teacher creativity, or it was the consequence of a student interest.

Nowadays it is necessary to work hard to achieve the high level of knowledge as well. But the high availability of studying a foreign language has become “revolution” today. The supply is consumer-oriented. The consumer, in his turn, is oriented to the absolutely definite skills and knowledge, i.e. the consumption of definite part of a foreign language teaching market (6), and the university as the educational service supplier has to be ready to this demand. The more university can offer, the more competitive it will be, and the more skillful will be its graduates, the easier they will find the job.

In the modern economic situation our society seeks for highly qualified specialists, having deep knowledge in their profession but possessing a range of additional skills which are necessary for getting a well-paid job. Such a situation bears a big competition on the labor market, which makes the higher educational establishments revise the methods of teaching and expand the educational service sphere and give a different glance on the future specialists teaching methods (7).

Knowing a foreign language, especially English, gives a lot of opportunities as the boundaries are open and JV is nothing new nowadays. So, to be competitive on the labor market every graduate has to know a foreign language and the task of university management is to provide all the necessary possibilities for it.

The competitiveness of graduates becomes the key factor. As a result, the new aim of higher education reforms in modern universities is increasing and enlarging the special knowledge standard (8). As we can see, an extensive development of relations with different enterprises, organizing of joint ventures, international companies, associations, all this creates a problem of international negotiations, making international contacts, signing contracts, development and use of internet, where everybody can find the possibility of immediate communication with foreign colleagues, participating in international conferences, development of science require our graduates to know a foreign language, and not only one which is quiet often. Hence, there appears the necessity of preparing specialists with the knowledge of foreign language, which is especially important for engineers (9).

Nowadays it is difficult to speak about the competitiveness of graduates, if they don't speak at least one foreign language and the language of proficiency especially. It concerns all kinds of specialists and spheres (10).

In the conclusion, it should be noted that all the problems mentioned above are certainly just a few, and there are a lot more otherones. All the problems can't be solved in a year or two, it of course takes time. But nevertheless, one should not forget about it, thorough and gradual approach will help in it. Having so many opportunities in life people, especially young people can choose, and the society gives them a great choice, where education, as a part of it should be able to provide new and better conditions, be competitive, interesting and attractive.

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