

Examination on education of talent and special abilities

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In the report of UNESCO experts developing higher education quality concept it is mentioned that “application of informational technologies and control provided by the independent commission helps to ensure transparency during admission examinations to universities in Azerbaijan and their assessment”.

Testing method of examination, practiced in Azerbaijan since 1992, is improving from year to year and this makes important contribution to efficiency of education system and the process of preparation of competent and highly qualified specialists-professionals.

Considering that our students have wide range in choice of professions including specialties requiring talent and special abilities, there is a need for additional choice tool during examination process for such directions as fine art, music, architecture and design, theatre, cinematography and choreography, physical training and sport. This is main reason why examinations for specialties of those directions include additional examination for education of talent and special abilities, i.e. exam of speciality or creative abilities.

Comparing with testing method of examination there is a lack of attention to examination on education of talent and special abilities in international assessment systems as well as in the national one.

The State Students Admission Commission (SSAC) of Azerbaijan conducting this examination is guided by international practices in this direction and takes into consideration national features. SSAC tries to improve assessment process of creative examination using new technologies and considering traditional features.

Let's have a look at methods of conducting of an examination on education of talent and special abilities. This examination is conducted by specialized commissions organized by the SSAC in centralized order. These commissions consist of specialists from different universities, secondary special schools, SSAC and members of creative unions. Unlike test examination this examination in Azerbaijan, as well as in international practice basically in all directions (excepting the direction "fine arts" and «architecture and design») is conducted traditionally, i.e. in direct contact of the entrant with the teacher - examiner.

Place of these examinations is selected depending on direction of specialty. So, examinations on revealing abilities in the direction the fine arts are spent in the Azerbaijan State Academy of Arts; in the direction musical art - in the Baku Musical Academy, in the direction architecture and design - in Azerbaijan University of Architecture and Construction, in the direction theatre, cinema and choreographic art - at the Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Art, in the direction physical training and sports - in the Azerbaijan State Academy of Physical Training and Sports.

In order to take part in this examination entrants apply by submitting relevant documents and passing registration by specialized commission on examination on education of talent and special abilities. During registration period entrants also present their portfolios if it is required by regulations. (directions: the fine arts, architecture and design, specialties: choreographic art, cameraman)

Creative examinations differ by content, conducting formats and assessment criteria.

Depending on specialty examination on revealing of talent and special abilities includes examination on one or two subjects. If the examination consists of two or more subjects or parts, firstly average marks are calculated on separate subjects, then final mark is calculated according to the marks of each separate examination on five-point scale.

You can see this process on the example of examination on general callisthenics.

Table #1

PHYSICAL TRAINING AND SPORT SPECIALIZATION
NORMS OF ABILITY EXAMINATIONS ON “GENERAL CALLISTHENICS”

FOR MEN

#	Exercise	five	four	three	five	four	three	five	four	three	five	four	three
		16-18 year old			19-28 year old			29-35 year old			elder than 35		
1	100 m. sprint (second)	13.4	13.6	13.8	13.2	13.4	13.6	13.6	13.8	14.0	15.0	16.0	17.0
2	1000 m. distance race (minute, second)	3.20.0	3.25.0	3.30.0	3.10.0	3.15.0	3.20.0	3.30.0	3.40.0	3.50.0	4.00.0	4.10.0	4.20.0
3	Tightening on horizontal bar (times)	14	12	10	15	13	11	10	8	6	8	6	4
4	Standing broad jump (cm)	240	230	220	250	240	230	240	220	200	220	200	180

Table #2

FOR WOMEN

#	Exercise	five	four	Three	five	four	three	five	four	three	five	four	three
		16-18 year old			19-28 year old			29-35 year old			Elder than 35		
1	100 m. sprint (second)	15.5	16.0	16.5	15.2	15.7	16.2	16.0	16.5	17.0	19.0	20.0	21.0
2	500 m. distance race (minute, second)	1.50.0	1.55.0	2.00.0	1.45.0	1.55.0	2.05.0	2.00.0	2.05.0	2.10.0	2.10.0	2.20.0	2.30.0
3	Bending and unbending of arms in laying position while hands are on gymnastic bench (times)	14	12	10	16	15	14	10	9	8	7	6	5
4	Standing broad jump (cm)	210	190	170	220	200	180	190	180	170	170	160	150













Transformation of grades obtained, and calculation of average and total grades are shown in the table #3.

Table #3

Grades on General calisthenics	Average grade	Total grade on GC examination (after rounding off)
20	5.0	5 (five)
19	4.75	5 (five)
18	4.5	5 (five)
17	4.25	4 (four)
16	4.0	4 (four)
15	3.75	4 (four)
14	3.5	4 (four)
13	3.25	3 (three)
12	3.0	3 (three)

Criteria of grade of examinations could be transformed depending on their specific form. For example, during examination on drawing in the “Architecture and design” direction entrants are asked to perform exercise. In such cases for better assessment of works large assessment scale is practised. As you can see from the table #4 100 -score scale has following criteria.

Table #4

#	Requirements	Exercises		Score
		ornamental pattern	Antique head	
1	Placing of drawing with regard to size of paper			5
2	Finding out and construction of correct perspectives with regard to eye level			25
3	Finding out relative measurements of the model/nature			15
4	Structural construction of model			25
5	Work with light and shadows on the drawing of model			5
6	Correct working on material structure of model			10

7	Completing of drawing with light and shadows			15
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While the results of implemented exercises assessed according to 100-score scale express quantitative features, their transformation to traditional grades (excellent, good, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory) is an expression of qualitative features of entrant's achievements.

Table #5

Scores	Mark
45-69	3 Three
70-90	4 Four
91-100	5 Five

Main assessment criteria in Theatre, cinematography and choreography and Music directions are performance skills.

Practices of conducting of examination on finding out entrant's talent and special abilities show that in spite of transparency and objectivism in the conducting of an examination at the same moment there is teacher's subjectivism. Teacher's subjectivism is a reason of why entrants prefer testing. This stimulates search of the ways for applying testing method in some theoretical subjects in creative examination.

If an entrant gets bad mark on one of the examinations, then he/she loses the right to select this specialty and is not allowed to take other examinations of this commission.

Conducting such examination requires hard work in preparing as methodological as well organizational issues during whole pre-examination period. The programs of admission examinations should be designed and approved, according to these programs methodological recommendations for entrants should be written, then universities should provide positive reference on these recommendations, and methodological instructions should be published in the special edition of SSAC "Abituriyent" journal.

For these purposes SSAC has organized work of scientific - methodological workshops. Traditionally preparation for next examination for finding out talent and special abilities begins with extended meeting of scientific - methodological workshops with participation of professors and teachers of universities chaired by the chairperson of SSAC Dr. M. Abbaszadeh. During the sessions of such workshops admission results of examination for admission to specialties requiring induction of entrant's talent and special abilities are analyzed by maximum and minimum scores, by regions, by numbers of application to various specialties, the process of examinations is assessed, and the ways of improvement are proposed. Decision of extended meeting of scientific methodological workshop is a mean of next year work of scientific methodological seminar for those directions. It should be noted that participants of such seminars in all directions are teachers from universities and specialized colleges. As a result of their direct joint work exam program, methodological recommendations and conducting methods of exam on finding out talent and special abilities are getting better and more sufficient.

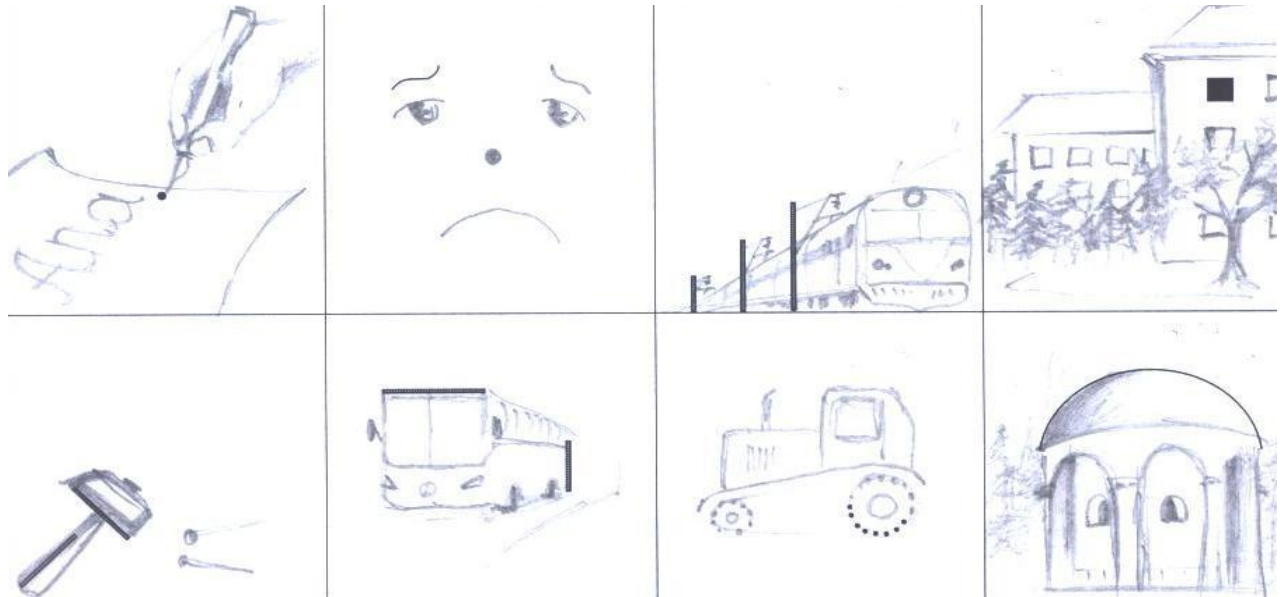
Work during the workshops has creative nature. The participants of such workshops try to find more suitable methods of conducting of these examinations. A new model practised in the international experience is under development. This model considers application of method of psychological testing during revelation of creative potential process.

This year two techniques have been tested for revealing of creative potential among first-year students of the Azerbaijan State Academy of Arts and Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Art on

the specialities the artist-designer, artist-on advertising business, artist on carpet, artist on fashion design.

The purpose of the approbation was formation of criteria of estimation and norms at processing these techniques for further use in this direction.

Example1: Varteg-test



Example2: Fantastic animal



The result of activity of training-methodological workshops is guided by directions. At the moment entrants are provided wide range of training-methodological guides in the following directions: fine art, music, architecture and design, theatre, cinematography and choreography, physical training and sport.



Recommendations:

- It is necessary to apply modern models of conducting of examination on revelation of talent and specific abilities in order to improve this process;
- It should be paid special attention to arrangement of conditions and new possibilities for scientific researches in this sphere.

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