

Philosophy of transition from traditional school to modern one and new assessment policy

Today, the role of knowledge in society is rapidly increasing. The economy of the 21st century is knowledge-based economy. Knowledge, new ideas, human capital, highly skilled and experienced professionals play significant role on sustainable development of each country. It is important to pay more attention to the initial stages of education for preparation of such professionals. Traditional schools are not able to solve growing necessary issues now, they must be ready to react new challenges adequately. The article analyzes the history of how the traditional school has taken its way to the "modern school", as well as the role of the "School Improvement" concept in transition to modern school, and new assessment policy in education system. Today's school (these words, first and foremost, relate to our reality) doesn't imply the realization of the individual's creative potential by its organizational structure and method. It implies elimination of individual differences among students. The new era dictates us that the future destiny of a student is being determined in elementary school now. In spite of all these, one of the main questions we are still facing is: How do we want to see future generations? In order to answer this question, the paradigms occur during the transformation of education from the industrial society to the post-modern society were also analyzed. We came to a conclusion that modern teaching should serve not only to recall a set of facts, but also to gain skills that enable a person to acquire the necessary knowledge. To this end, the teaching methods should be improved and content should be modernized. All these changes should realistically allow individuals to think about upbringing and realize their personal qualities. The article also covers the analysis of the key aspects of adaptation of assessment policy implemented in the admission exams in Azerbaijan to our national peculiarity.

Key words: Old school, new school, new assessment policy

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Modern method of teaching – should serve not only to remind certain file of facts, but also to help human obtain abilities enabling him/her to gain necessary knowledge. For this purpose, the teaching methods should be improved and the content be updated. These opinions can be assessed as a challenge before the modern school. We cannot move to 21th century through the path designed by a traditional school, since it does not realize the future we need. Danish philosopher Kierkegaard says: “We need such a school that dares to realize not any person, but certain person”. Although his idea emerged from the thoughts about person’s possible self-realization ways, in its very essence, we can see the most important task of the school. In all periods, the school has dealt with the realization of person. However, every period and every culture had a public-social request envisaging the realization of this or other qualities of person – realization of totally certain individual. In this sense, the capacities of the traditional school are questioned. Moreover, the school life should always be assessed from a particular human point of view. When registering their children at school, parents do not think about upbringing process and that whether the school in a position to fulfill the social request requiring the realization of person. Parents are first interested in school’s ability to discover talent of their children. In actuality, the school should simply think about upbringing, and allow the particular individual to realize his/her personal qualities.

However, does the traditional school dare to take the responsibilities that merely envisage realizing the specific qualities of an individual? Why, in this school, the right of individual to discover his or her own uniqueness coming from nature is not realized? Is it possible that, from the very beginning, a traditional school was focused on the social tasks? How can we explain the position of the society and the parents allowing the school simply to educate people? It is not an easy task to answer all these questions. However, it would not appropriate to make a decision without clarifying all the questions on the opinions concerning schools. In this case, it can be said that in order to put the new school idea ("open school", "experimental school", "private school", "family-school", etc.) into the practice, the previous and current state of society, science, and school should be profoundly analyzed.

As a special social institution that realizes certain types of personality needed at different stages of social development, school emerged in the early days of human history. Throughout the history of society, this institution has been in the center of attention, as the most important issues of social development were closely connected to its regular functioning. Therefore, from ancient times until the present, taking care of school and making efforts to find ways to improve it has been considered as factors determining the progress of society. The society can move forward only by way of intensive realization of human qualities, and such a progress is achieved through the realistic upbringing system. For that reason, at all times, in finding “modern school”, they got aware the possibility of choosing the ways of development in compliance with the spirit of society. In any case, each period relates its own moral development prospects to the idea of a "modern school" aimed at the realization of new ideals and a new type of personality. Continuous “modern school” searches reflect the society’s moral development dynamic in an outstanding way. The contradiction between the conservatism of a traditional school and the dynamics of the spiritual culture of a society is the main source of the crisis, that actualize the search for new education forms of the personality education system. This crisis resulted from the impact of socio-cultural and methodological factors. Before considering all of these, it should be noted that the school, in character, always inclines towards the traditionalism, and therefore, it is quite normal for it to resist all kinds of innovations. This fundamental paradox allows to explain why the idea of a "modern school" has remained open for a long time, while the real school does not satisfy anyone in principle.

The school should have an immunity to innovations; otherwise, it cannot realize the program of preparation of a new generation of the educated people. The State Examination Center, as an organization of measurement and evaluation, works on improving the criteria for measuring knowledge in line with the reforms in the field of education.

It should be noted that in accordance with the reforms in the field of education in Azerbaijan, in 2009, first grade pupils began to study with the new subject curricula and the content of education was profoundly changed. In line with these changes, the State Students Admission Commission (at present State Examination Center) started to develop a new model of knowledge assessment in the future and, since 2013, has been conducting the monitoring examinations among V-XI grade pupils of general education institutions of the Republic in order to organize the final assessment (attestation). Monitoring exams was very important step, on the one hand, to obtain more reliable information about pupils' knowledge and skills and the outcomes of teaching; and on the other hand, based on the information obtained, to achieve positive changes in different directions in the field of education (appropriate changes in subject curricula and textbooks, development pupils' logical thinking, etc.). On the presentation, you can see the number of pupils taking part in the monitoring exams conducted by the SSAC (at present SEC) in 2013-2016. I would like to recall that in 2017, during the graduation exams of 9th grade pupils (first curriculum graders), 108073 pupils took part in. 85459 out of these pupils had participated in the monitoring exams in different years and thus were already familiar with the new assessment tools that would be applied in school graduation examinations.

Monitoring examinations			
	Mother tongue	Mathematics	Total
2013 / 5th grade	11707	11345	23052
2014 / 6th grade	11066	9829	20895
2015 / 7th grade	10994	9300	20294
2016 / 8th grade	11458	9760	21218
Cəmi	45225	40234	85459

	Mother tongue	Mathematics	Total
2014 / 5th grade	10899	9881	20780
2015 / 6th grade	10814	9087	19901
2016 / 7th grade	8990	7226	16216
Cəmi	30703	26194	56897

	Mother tongue	Mathematics	Total
2017 / 6th grade (on the basis of 5 th grade)	14552	11868	26420

	English	
2017 / 10th grade (on the basis of 9th grade)	11728	

The State Examination Center regularly continues its works on the use of analysis of value-added indicators to improve Student Learning. Kate Kennedy, Mary Peters and Michael Thomas consider that the value-added is the difference between pupil's beginning achievement (his/her test results of past year) and the current achievement. One of the above-mentioned authors has used diagnostic tests at the classroom at the beginning, middle, and end of the academic year in order to track pupils' understanding quality of texts.

Indeed, it is close to our experience and this experiment has been carried out for many years.

The value-added analysis is a new approach. It reflects the effect of teaching methods on the progress of pupils and the accurate observance of the dynamics.

It should be clarified: the value-added analysis is not only the difference between the start and final results. At the same time, it makes use of complex statistical modeling technique to organize precise and favorable control of pupils' progress.

Modern assessment opportunities, which envisage processing and analyzing the indicators of pupils' achievement, are part of this technique.

We can note as an example that the applicants in our country enjoy the opportunity to take an exam twice. When analyzing the exam results of applicants taking part in both exams in the same specialty group in 2018 (See: Chart 1), it appeared clear that the results of applicants in the second exam have better than the results of the first exam. The average score of difference between the results of applicants taking part in both exams was equal 2.66 points. The difference between the results of about 69-70% of applicants in these two exams has been less than 50 points and 93-94% less than 100 (the maximum score is 700). Note that the correlation coefficient between the results was equal 0.94. The chart below shows the distribution of differences of the scores by applicants taking part in both exams:

Distribution of score difference by the applicants taking part in both exams (on the same major group)

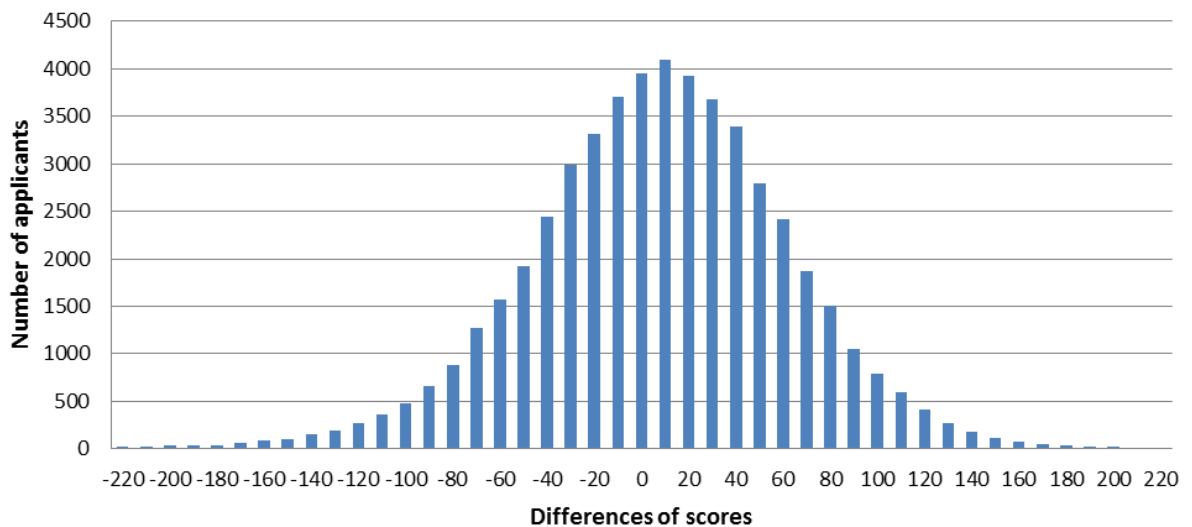


Chart 1

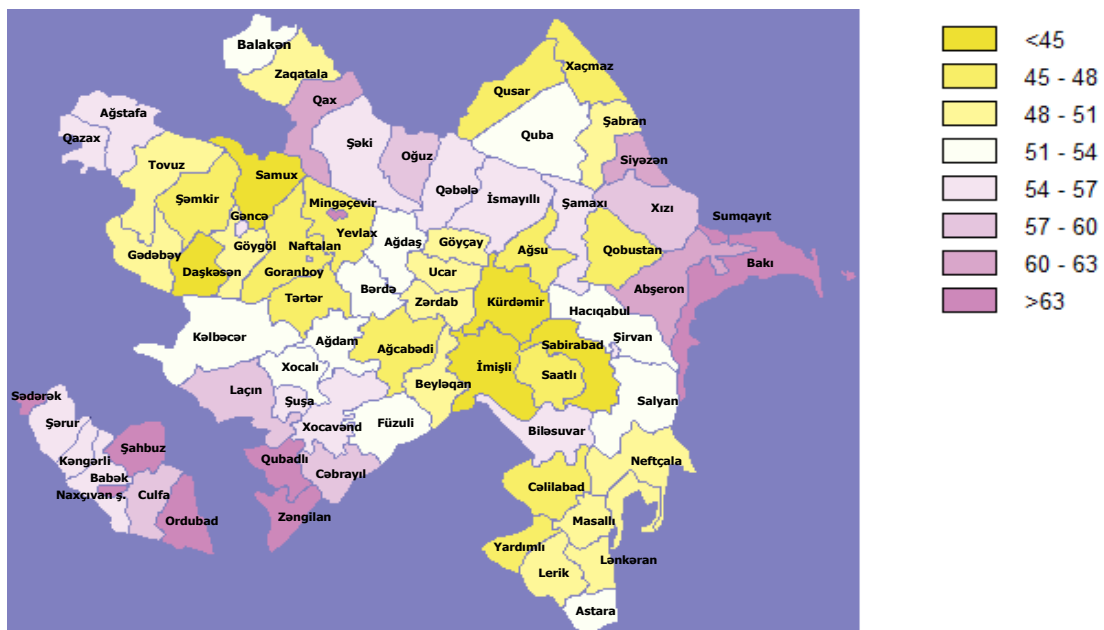
Moreover, by studying the results of the 9th and 11th grade pupils achieved from the graduation exam subjects, the value-added indicators are analyzed. The comparison of the distribution of results shows that pupils of 11th grade achieved better results. For visual comparison, the relative scores (percentage of correct answers) of average pupil in the subjects were compared. In 2018, at the second stage of graduation exam, the average 9th grade pupil received 51.73 points in teaching language subject and 47.48 points in math. The average 11th grade pupil scored 57.95 and 55.95 points, accordingly. It appears clear that 11th grade pupils achieved higher results than the 9th grade pupils did. We can conclude that pupils are thinking more seriously about their education after 9th grade. We consider that the main reason is that, beginning from the 9th grade, pupils receive extracurricular

courses and study under the guidance of tutors to prepare for admission exams to higher education institutions and to secondary specialized education institutions on the basis of full secondary education. The pupils' confidence in the transparency and objectivity of exams conducted by the SEC makes them be more demanding of oneself and take more serious approach towards the education.

9th grade school leaving examination, Mathematics, Distribution of average scores among regions received by pupils



11th grade school leaving examination, Mathematics, Distribution of correct answers (by percentage) among regions received by average pupil



Comparisons for evaluating new skills arising from the curriculum will create opportunities to analyze the value-added score in a new format.

In the West, the theory of “School Improvement” has become to be widely used. The term itself has two meanings:

- to turn the school into a place where pupils can be taught through the common efforts;
- a robust approach to changes in the field of education improving pupils’ results, as well as to strengthen the ability of school in change management.

The school should have the capacity to change itself owing to its capabilities and power. The school improvement should mobilize all its potential and focus on the improvement of pupils’ results. However, if the school often undergoes radical reforms, then, as one would expect, the main social functions of entire upbringing system will be severely damaged. Therefore, the community is interested in the school’s functioning as a sufficiently stable social institution (in the status of a socio-cultural tradition), however, at the same time, the changing moral life increases the tendency of reforms in a number of parameters of that social institution. Accepting the contradiction of “tradition - innovation” as a natural inevitable feature of school life will allow for more accurate and conscious implementation of both critical analysis of traditional school and the development of essential reform programs.

On the ground of school’s originality that we noted, it becomes clear that both the community and the school should be very careful of new school ideas envisaging fundamental reform of the entire upbringing system. This is what in the real life happens. It is enough to say that despite it has been subject to more than 100 years of consistent and comprehensive criticism, the school-factory still operates at present.

It shows that every program aimed at reforming a traditional school should address two issues that are interrelated and interdependent: on the one hand, it should substantiate its aim to reject the existing upbringing system in the society; and on the other hand, should create an equal and serious basis to choose this or another new system of upbringing. In this case, it should be noted that the traditional school has used up all its positive potential and does not meet the socio-cultural requirements of society’s current development phase. In the Western world, the movement to remove the traditional school from its position and establish "modern school" began at the beginning of 20th century. Well-known American philosopher, pedagogue and educator John Dewey noted in one of his considerations: ““A biologist can rebuild a whole animal based on one or two bones. So if we put before the mind’s eye the ordinary schoolroom, with its row of ugly desks placed in geometrical order, crowded together so that there shall be as little moving room as possible, desks almost all of the same size, with just space enough to hold books, pencils and paper, and add a table, some chairs, the bare walls, and possibly a few pictures, we can reconstruct the only educational activity that can possibly go on in such a place. It is all made for ‘listening’ – because simply studying out of a book is only another kind of listening; it marks the dependency of one mind upon another. In other word, listening means passively in absorbing”.

For hundreds of years, this school has merely worked for the happiness of the humanity, and its obvious inaccuracies left unnoticed, as the society itself had not yet developed a new vision of realization of individual. For the developed countries of the Western world, it became possible at the beginning of 20th century, and John Dewey was one of the first educators to notice the main inaccuracies of the traditional school in its previous positive characteristics. This confirms the common idea that every social institution is included in the dynamics of social life: in one stage of history, it can be positive and, in another stage negative. In the context of changing nature of social life, the attempts to keep the system of educating this or other personality unchanged are proved ineffective, and such conflicts, in a normal society, should be resolved in good time. However, this process requires great

mental activity, which helps spread of new ideas in the world of education, in its positive and negative sides. Not everyone in the society can see the traditional school from Dewey's eyes. However, it is known that our perception of the environment is mainly shaped by the knowledge in our minds. In order to reject the traditional school, it is necessary to find its inaccuracies. This is what the main duty of critical analysis of traditional upbringing system contains.

Today's school (these words essentially relate to our reality), by its organizational structure and methodology, envisages addressing the individual differences of pupils, but not the realization of the creative potential of the person. Considering that the intellectual development of person is not, in fact, a restorable process, it can be said that a pupil's fate is determined in a primary school. Nevertheless, one of the main questions that should be addressed is: How do we want to see the future generations? The change in the paradigms of education requires a reconsideration of its aims, content, methods, forms and means. There are two different approaches:

First, we want our pupils to be able to take an initiative, be independent, manage complex situations, solve problems independently, and make wise decisions. To this end, they must be able to freely perceive and increase the knowledge necessary for them, and work with information.

Second, we do not allow them to go beyond the traditional education. In this situation, they gain certain knowledge, but they cannot find the ways out of difficult situations freely and make decisions independently. This is the case that the traditional education is not satisfactory in resolving these problems.

Only independent-minded citizens are able to become highly expertized and skilled professionals in their future jobs. At the same time, they develop themselves morally and spiritually, incline to innovations, joint collaborations, communications, and cooperation, and put forward initiatives and creativity in unstable and often changing situations.

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