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THEORY OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN: GLOBALIZATION AND INTEGRATION AS BACKGROUND OF EDUCATION

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Початкова освіта в Азербайджані значно покращилася з погляду змісту й форми. Навички, які прищеплюються в рамках дисципліни на рівні початкової освіти, дуже часто перетинаються з навичками іншої дисципліни. Поєднання навчання та гри, різноманітність видів діяльності в класі й загальні аспекти дисциплін з погляду знань і навичок призводять безпосередньо до інтегративної навчання. Причина переходу до інтегративної моделі освіти насамперед полягає в тому, що кордони між країнами поступово усуваються, що не обов'язково пов'язано з географічними рамками, а скоріше говорить про відмінності в релігії, мові, освіті й соціальній структурі. Стає неминучою необхідність розроблення загальної моделі навчального плану, яка відповідає різним потребам усіх учасників освіти. Показово, що інтеграційна модель навчання на початковому рівні освіти розвивається не тільки на рівні країни, а й у єдиному освітньому просторі. Цей факт підкреслює важливість розроблення моделі інтеграційного навчання, що означає, що всі учні у світі отримають приблизно рівні якість і кількість знань, навичок і вмінь.

Ключові слова: освіта, початкова освіта, теорія, теорія початкової освіти, навчальна програма, реформа, глобалізація, інтеграція.

Начальное образование в Азербайджане значительно улучшилось с точки зрения содержания и формы. Навыки, которые прививаются в рамках дисциплины на уровне начального образования, очень часто пересекаются с навыками другой дисциплины. Сочетание обучения и игры, разнообразие видов деятельности в классе и общие аспекты дисциплин с точки зрения знаний и навыков приводят непосредственно к интегративному обучению. Причина перехода к интегративной модели образования, прежде всего, заключается в том, что границы между странами постепенно устраняются, что не обязательно связано с географическими рамками, а скорее говорит о различиях в религии, языке, образовании и социальной структуре. Становится неизбежной необходимостью разработки общей модели учебного плана, которая отвечает различным потребностям всех участников образования. Показательно, что интегративная модель обучения на начальном уровне образования развивается не только на страновом уровне, но и в едином образовательном пространстве. Этот факт подчеркивает важность разработки модели интегративного обучения, что означает, что все учащиеся в мире получают примерно равное качество и количество знаний, навыков и умений.

Ключевые слова: образование, начальное образование, теория, теория начального образования, учебная программа, реформа, глобализация, интеграция.

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Primary education in Azerbaijan has developed significantly in terms of content and form. Skills to be taught within a discipline in primary education level very often overlap with skills of other discipline. Unity of leaning and play, diversity of activities within classroom process and common aspects of disciplines in terms of knowledge and skills lead directly to integrative teaching. Foremost reason for transferring to an integrative model of education is that borders between countries are being eliminated gradually which is not necessarily about geographical concept, but rather about religion, language, education and social structure. It is becoming an inevitable need to develop a common curriculum model which meets various needs of cosmopolitan people. It is significant that integrative learning model in primary education level is developed not just on a country level, but rather on single education region. This fact underlines the significance of developing integrative education model which means that all the learners in the world will acquire the same quality and quantity of knowledge, skills and values.

Key words: education, primary education, theory, theory of primary education, curriculum, reform, globalization, integration.

The Republic of Azerbaijan is sovereign state which is in social, economic, financial and moral developmental stage. However, development in terms of above-mentioned aspects do not occur spontaneously. There are factors determining this development one of which is education with axiological sense. Education is a social order which ensures

dissemination and formation of state requirements throughout society. Education is a general concept which is impossible to be restricted within certain geographical location. All the states in the world need each other in order to ensure their development. In other words, since education is moral value it is definitely impossible to limit it within certain



borders and isolate it from other countries and societies. Integration is gaining more importance in education as it is in cultural, social and economic spheres.

“The Reform Program in the Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan”, June 15 1999, order № 168 by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and relevant implementation procedures has had special effect on commencing new stage in education, especially primary education.

The main aim of the reform is to support full development of education system of Azerbaijan, modernise it in terms of form and content, and upgrade it to the level of education system of leading countries. “The foremost objective of education reform is to retain and provide further development of accumulated potential in the level of primary, secondary, vocational and higher education, create legal framework regulating education system, and contribute to the implementation of state policy on democratization of political, economic and social life of society which is envisaged by the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Education Law” [2].

Expected results of the reform are as followings:

- Formation of new legal framework, economic and information base of the education system;

- Foundation of science and education centers of modern type and network of education institutions through the integration of education institutions of various levels and orientations, and formation of new structure of education system in accordance with requirements of market economy;

- Rearrangement of education programs and plans in accordance with national education standards for public education and all stages of vocational education. Reformation of education in accordance with learners’ potential based on demands of state, society and individuals;

- Development of teacher training process and raise the degree of competitiveness and professional skills of teachers;

- Formation of methodical and information assurance of education in accordance with real demands and strategic objectives;

- Formation of new model of state-public and public-state management;

- Formation of material and technical base of schools meeting modern demands;

- Formation of new economic model of funding mechanism of education system [2].

There have been considerable progress in primary education theory in Azerbaijan in connection with reform program.

“State Strategy on education development in the Republic of Azerbaijan” approved by the Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, October 24 2013, attaches special importance to integration process in education. Several provisions in the Strategy envisage conforming education management and funding mechanism to international standards. The Strategy states: “there is a huge need in rapidly progressing Azerbaijan to take immediate measures to modernise education system so that it can meet the challenges of development of human capital, and adapt indicators of quality education with European standards.” Also the Strategy underlines: “The goal of the Strategy is create an education system with competent teachers and infrastructure with ultra-modern technologies which will hold a leading position in the world with its quality indicators and wide coverage. The education system of Azerbaijan needs to be economically sustainable and meet requirements of higher international standards” [1].

Moreover, the above-mentioned document emphasizes: “one of the strategic goals of the country is ensure sustainable economic development and raise social welfare of people through further modernization adjustment of social-economic life to progressive international experience. By modernization it is firstly envisaged to apply innovations, which are developed based on advanced technologies, management and scientific achievements, to social-economic life of the country. In order to attain this goal the government designated priorities: to ensure fast integration of national economy into world economy; develop human capital; provide individuals with relevant knowledge and skills. Comprising the primary goal of the education system, development of human capital is one of the vital conditions to ensure successful integration into global system and sustain international competition” [1].

“State Strategy on education development in the Republic of Azerbaijan” contains essential provisions regarding principle of integrativeness of education. K-12 system (public education of 12 years), which will definitely alter education system fundamentally and will necessarily increase sense of responsibility, places great importance on integrative learning in education with special attention on primary education. The fact that there are too many disciplines in education system in Azerbaijan, which cause time shortage, urges educators to think about integration of various disciplines. Currently, this issue is a topic of public discourse and there is suggestion that disciplines with similar bases be integrated.



Research of education system of other countries, education abroad program for students of Azerbaijan, and exchange programs require that all activities be implemented integratively. It is impossible to gain social progress and achievement without global integration and reestablishing education in accordance with modern trends.

In modern times primary education in Azerbaijan has developed significantly in terms of content and form. Primary education, provides students with more sophisticated system and regime right after pre-primary education. Primary education involves amalgam of unique knowledge and skills. Students acquire fundamental system of knowledge and skills which are needed throughout basic education. From this perspective it is essential to adopt special approach to primary education so that it contains necessary knowledge, skills and values. Currently, education content and its enhancement is in the focus of attention and there several researches being conducted on this issue. This is one of the everlasting challenges of information society.

Primary education differs from other education stages in terms of its form and content. Skills to be taught within a discipline in primary education level are very often overlap with skills of other discipline. Age specific and individual psychological characteristics of students require that educators use common educative potentials of various disciplines while instilling certain skills. Unity of leaning and play, diversity of activities within classroom process and common aspects of disciplines in terms of knowledge and skills lead directly to integrative teaching. Within integration it is possible refer to potentials of several disciplines or combine various disciplines. Since all curricula in Azerbaijan are based on the same document it is still not possible to develop specific curriculum for each discipline. However, it is planed to develop discipline specific curriculum as it is in different foreign countries like USA, Germany etc.

The period of primary education is four years. Within four years disciplines, standards to be realised, curriculum content to be applied, and life skills to be instilled into students are generalised. Knowledge and skills relevant to age and individual needs are defined. Knowledge and skills are instilled by a certain class teacher (sometimes specific discipline teacher are involved in teacher process) during four years so that students are ready for the next education level.

Shortage of primary education years causes some challenges. Periods of primary education in most countries are five or six years which means that it is impossible to accommo-

date content of primary education within four years. Given to age and individual features of students, it is inappropriate to overload student with more materials. Moreover, knowledge and skills should be of fundamental peculiarity and should develop creativity of students.

A comparative analyses of education model of some countries and drawing analogy between them will give detailed description of the real international situation. The followings are peculiar to education model of majority of countries:

- Primary education lasts five years or more;
- Primary education is compulsory;
- Disciplines of primary education should be of wider aspects;
- The chief aim of primary education is to teach students to be independent and develop students cognitively, mentally and physically as well as raising their creativity;
- Students learn social skills and civil rights as well as religious knowledge;
- Schools are fully equipped with material and technical resources;
- Schools are free to choose textbooks and education programs;
- Schools pay special attention to teacher recruitment and in-service trainings.

Huge and planed measures are taken in order to better education system, especially primary education. There has been considerable advancement in content of primary education, although not in its structure, since start of education reform, 1999: the number of disciplines has been changed; additional materials have been included in and excluded from education program; textbooks and handbooks have been updated; new school buildings have been constructed; and schools have been provided with modern material and technical resources.

For the purpose of gaining better results, it is possible to achieve pedagogical productivity and effectiveness by applying contemporary education models. Application of relevant education model will definitely lead to better education quality and learning results. Unlike traditional education model, new approaches in education will urge educators to develop professionally.

There are several curriculum models which are widely utilized in the world. One of the prominent and extensively used models is Tyler model which was developed by Ralph Tyler, an American educator, in 1940. All the educators in USA make an effective use of this model and its varied versions for better teaching performance.

The main feature of this curriculum model is that learning process is divided into several



a well-planned stages. This model is of high quality and practicality which consist of four stages:

1. Defining objectives of a school;
2. Defining education experience of a school concerning objectives;
3. Realising new experience;
4. Assessment of objectives.

While developing the model R. Tyler took those factors in special consideration which would boost education in public and social perspectives. Moreover, this model carefully considers needs and aims of learners, teachers as well as whole society. Besides, this model defines leaning objectives precisely scrutinizing philosophical, pedagogical, psychological, didactic, theoretical and practical facets of education.

Another curriculum model belongs to Hilda Taba (1962), an Estonian educator. H. Taba suggests that there be assessment process right after development and application of content standards. For Taba successful curriculum is based on seven stages:

1. Diagnosis of students' needs;
2. Identification of learning objectives by a teacher;
3. Correspondence between learning objectives and content;
4. Succession of learning content in conformity with the level of interests and achievements of learners;
5. Relevance of teaching methods to learning activities of learners;
6. Organizing effective learning process;
7. Involving students and teachers into assessment process [5].

Taba suggests that there are three types of learning objectives: knowledge – what students need to know (understand), skills – how students learn, concepts – what need to be learned.

Stanford University professor Elliot Eisner conducted crucial researches in education. With deeper insight into education programs E. Eisner developed curriculum model.

The model by E. Eisner, developed in 1991, was called aesthetic model. E. Eisner suggests that aesthetic components and behavioral principles are combined in order to form education program (curriculum). E. Eisner thinks that an effective curriculum model should be both versatile (symmetric) and systematic [3].

Upon assessing the needs of learners and teachers in USA, E. Eisner developed five-dimensional curriculum model. He considered that it is important a curriculum model should have the following approaches: a) objective; b) structure; c) education; d) pedagogy; e) assessment.

E. Eisner strongly believes that in case of missing one of these approaches pedagogical process may possibly fail to gain its objectives. Moreover, all the above-mentioned aspects of the suggested curriculum model are interrelated with each others.

The curriculum in use in Azerbaijan is an amalgam of deductive model by R. Tyler and aesthetic model by E. Eisner. This model enables educators to define learning objectives in advance and define subobjectives afterwards which is followed by applying various teaching methods to gain learning aims. During this period, as E. Eisner mentioned, educators try to realize learning aims and achieve successful results.

Decision on which curriculum model is the best appropriate one should base on careful consideration of real situation of education. In addition to the current curriculum in Azerbaijan there is a need to develop an alternative model of curriculum. Some countries have such experience. The essence of having alternative model of curriculum is that expected learning results in the second one is simpler. In some foreign countries (USA, Germany etc.) educators usually develop a curriculum model which meets specific local needs. This approach definitely leads to emergence of variations of curriculum models, however this experience ensures accessibility of education for all.

Creating integrative education model and its successful implementation in primary education level is of utmost importance in terms of ensuring unity of education process in a school. As a systematic and compulsory stage of education, primary education level determines the future quality and priorities of education. Learning achievements in primary education function as a base for further life experience.

How to create an integrative learning model in primary education level? What is the importance of an integrative model?

Foremost reason for transferring to an integrative model of education is that borders between countries are being eliminated gradually which is not necessarily about geographical concept, but rather about religion, language, education and social structure. It is becoming an inevitable need to develop a common curriculum model which meets various needs of cosmopolitan people.

It is significant that integrative learning model in primary education level is developed not just on a country level, but rather on single education region. This fact underlines the significance of developing integrative education model which means that all the learners in the world will acquire the same quality



and quantity of knowledge, skills and values. Surely there is an issue concerning preservation of national values which is a psychological aspect of the process.

For the purpose of developing integrative model it is needed to take the following measures: education experts from various countries need to work in groups to investigate education systems in all countries (at least in those countries which have recently started to use curriculum); define megacompetences; determine objectives and duties; delineate structure, form, content and assessment issues. Upon determining all these aspects a universal model can be developed.

Naturally, some questions emerge: What is the advantage of integrative model for a country? Developing a common model means that the counties applying this kind of model will have standard learners regardless of economic, social and political differences. Furthermore, integrative model is vital in terms of the fact that people have the chance of join lifelong education process and continue education in any country. In case of migration or other similar situations learners will join education process immediately without encountering barriers due to integrative model.

It is necessary that harmonization of education should firstly base on adaption of structure. Primary education in Azerbaijan consists of four years. However, this period in some other countries covers five or more years. Another issue appearing within the context of integrative model is content of education. It is pivotal that content of education, education results, objectives, knowledge and skills to be gained conform to international equivalents. Education content in primary education in Azerbaijan have been made more com-

plicated in recent years which causes some challenges for learners to acquire content of education program appropriately within four years.

There is an urgent need to carry out various reforms in order to integrate national education system, especially primary education level, in world education. For this purpose, first of all, structure of education needs to be renewed. The period of primary education should be prolonged, content and form of education should be slightly altered, disciplines should be the same as the are in other countries, objectives and duties should be integrated into international ones, and there should be single assessment system and common standards.

Globalization and world economy require that, like European countries, Azerbaijan update its education system and raise the quality of national education to the ones of developed countries.

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