Project method in the system "school - higher educational institution"

Annotation: The article is dedicated to studying the question of project method of training and education within the system “school – higher educational institution” application on the material of Russian reforms in the sphere of education. The state and perspectives of maintenance and development of Russian culture potential are analyzed. This takes place in the context of opportunities that are revealed by application of the abovementioned method in the process of organizational structure development and steady education system content filling.

Keywords: innovational matrixes, learning capability, project method, changes management.

Contemporary education throughout the world unquestionably keeps on remaining one of the most important ways of culture’s transmission. At that, in this case we can speak not only about succession with respect to cultural heredity; but what is especially important nowadays, we can speak about the transmission of the most “actual” part of culture – ability to creativity. In societies of middle-scaled development such ability to “creative activity” is usually associated with the system modernization of the whole way of life – economics, social structure, politics; sphere of everyday life and occupation. For more “advanced” social organisms the term “innovational matrixes” is used. This term characterizes readiness, capability and even, maybe, skill to face unforeseen quantitative and qualitative changes in the system not as a situation of “fail” of a smoothly running mechanism, but as a pretext for optimization of either the whole order of its functioning or nontrivial processing of system whole single fragments. As a matter of fact, in both cases dynamic approach to understanding of structure and nature of social organism functioning, connected to the setting of the task of “changes management”, is realized. In its turn, “changes management” is oriented on detection of heuristic component of cognition as practically valuable “competence” without which contemporary specialist will not be fit to any (and not only to administrative) work; and contemporary education will not meet the needs of quality standards. In other words, taking in account Hegel’s words, this form of education will not be education as it is, for quality in this case is capability to be yourself and not something other. Indeed, as one Russian humourist questioned rhetorically: “What cheese of low quality is? Is it not cheese already or not cheese yet?” so as not corresponding to quality standard education – already not education or not education yet.

This particular problem is present in contemporary society regardless of its social-economical “high-status position” and system of education development. Certain crisis of education is observed as in developed countries of Europe and America, as in former USSR area. Such diagnostics is usually connected with reasoning on “crisis of identity” of information and post information society man. To put it simpler, they refer to specific overcharges inherent in contemporary approaches to mastering knowledge in which extreme volume combines with exceeding specification, which in its turn is badly compatible with anthropological parameters of an average homo sapiens.

On the other hand, “underupload” of information, its “spamization at the entrance” (that in most cases takes place in contemporary youth’s environment that is ready “to download without reading”) is fraught with absence of clearly stated foundations, “gnoselogical foundation” in a sense, without which no knowledge will withstand. And the skills acquired in the course of practical activity will scarcely prove to be pragmatically correct.
In the context of the abovementioned it makes sense to consider other opportunities of work with specific problems that are inherent to contemporary stage of culture’s development and, as a consequence, existing shift in the relationships “learner – educator”. Such features of contemporary approach to education as its subject-subject interpretation, learner-centered approach and aspiration to practical orientation, from my point of view, must be supplemented with indicating a relatively new aspect of contemporary teaching interactivity (and education), which is necessity for application of project method as a steady process of education practice (at least, at the stage “school – higher educational institution”). This method appears to be one of the key elements of innovative matrix corresponding to the prospective tasks of modernization not only of educational space of the Russian Federation but also of the whole Russian society (Shestopal 2012:168).

By and large the given method is well-known and has been applied for rather a long time in the system of Russian education (at school, first of all). It has obtained special development over the last ten years when quality indices of reports began to be influenced by, including, the quantity of projects prepared in collaboration of pupils and teachers. These projects belong to different fields: from social (for example, creating of a wooden construction of “Yolochka” for its setting up on New Year’s Day in a children’s home under the patronage) to scientific - academic (designing projects in the field of genetic engineering, programs for artificial intellect and so on.). The progress of Russian schoolchildren in this field is known due to their participation in international academic competitions in which they rather often get a place; as well as owing to introduction of some discoveries into national economy.

Thus, project method has influenced the selection of “good quality material” for “entrance” into higher educational institution space. It resulted into “green light” given at the entrance to the winners of different All-Russian contests and academic competitions that have relevant reputation and acknowledged by the Ministry of Education and Science as a platform for realization of a really creative approach to knowledge and revelation of its participants’ intellectual potential.

It goes without saying that emphasis on the stated method will have at least some prospective meaning only in case if its vector is unambiguously directed the other way round from imitation connected with corruption tendencies in Russian society. The problem of “incoming knowledge” and struggle against its imitation, however, is faced in “western” society. Such situation exists in spite the fact that in developed countries of Europe

- there is no corruption in this sector “by definition” as education there is mainly free of charge,
- anti-corruption control is so strong that it makes no sense to oppose it,
- “matura” (certificate of obtaining secondary education that is sufficient for entrance to higher educational institution) is so difficult to obtain that there is almost no competition at enrollment into upper secondary forms (vice versa, there is a problem of enrollment into higher educational institution!)

At the same time, in developed countries the number of those who want to continue education is getting less and less, according to mass media and personal observations. Employers’ request for house painters and plumbers, gas plumbers and cashiers in supermarkets, let’s suppose, in Austria is incommensurably high in comparison with minor demand for conservatoire professors or doctors in the field of biotechnology. Created by society demand today dictates conspicuous “lowering of level” in distribution of “prestigious” and “of no prestige” professions; and it also convincingly demonstrates the prospect of development of service production sphere in different directions. So, in Europe, for example, salaries have significantly grown in the sphere of medical and psychological help, but not “in general”, and principally applied to care of elderly well-off
Top-class hairdresser’s salary is characterized by relatively more stability of income in comparison with the position of a stockbroker or an ordinary lawyer. Prestigious and well-paid positions of employees of state and state officials, however, require significant psychological and moral “response”, which is not attractive in comparison with other sectors of employment.

In Russia this problem is no less acute (Glagolev 2012: 10). Dramatic fall in industrial and agricultural production, that “swayed” the process of labor resource redistribution in 1990-s in direction of small-scale trade (if to be precise, resale), small and medium–sized business prevalence, today has led to moving of qualified workforce to those spheres where salary is relevant to “an average” standard of life. What is meant here is creation of “the army” of non-departmental security service, “cubicle drones”, development of different services sector branches (including trade and network communications). Former teachers and manufacturing process technicians become salesmen of everyday goods; and former military pilots and engineers – taxi and shuttle bus drivers. Part of “human capital” of Russia did not manage to adjust itself to “new format” and declassified (former diplomats became truck farmers; composers – homeless people). Another part managed to adapt to changed conditions, “having blended” with regular unpredictable turn of social entity life and connected with this new requirements. At that services sector – with the help of domestic economy theorists “copying” far and away not the most successful western standards – in 1990-s was replenished with such a significant sector as educating and up-bringing of growing generation.

Correspondingly, the generation that begins the world after the changes so fundamental to our motherland have taken place faces the task to “blend” with new sociocultural and economical reality in accordance with their own notion of required standard of life (and salary of course). Economical reasons become the leading ones at choosing profession. As a consequence, the realization of the fact that “you will have to do it all your life” comes, as a rule, much later than a man chooses speciality (including the profession that he is preparing himself while getting higher education). So here comes paradox: most graduates from Russian higher educational institutions (both technical and the humanities) are not going to work in the speciality. On the other hand, getting an opportunity to become, for example, a high-paid manager, they find with surprise in 2-3 years that such work is not interesting to them at all. Moreover, having earned a little money (for “a parachute”, though not necessarily “a golden one”), they would like to employ themselves into something significant, useful for their own soul and surrounding them people. One of the aspects of management theory and practice, that has revealed its potential on the background of crisis phenomena of contemporary Russian reality, encloses in the fact that in minds of economy organizers prevails the idea that professionalism is not a necessary condition at all for efficient management. More than that, one can manage a process not knowing its peculiarities.

It might be that one can manage. But you can’t develop process, “move” it into sought direction, creating “innovative changes ground” within the framework of evolutionary or emergent development of situation (but not its radical demolition).

For organizational efforts of such level “general management” is unacceptable. Combination of professionalism acquired in the process of education and skills obtained in applied exploration of acquired knowledge (on production traineeship and so on) is security of obtaining required initial competence of any specialist.

Thus high-quality education keeps on remaining the key to obtaining minimal skills. It’s quite another matter with the fact that not all the skills of this kind should be offered in the format of higher education. Development of the network of worthy vocational technical training (to speak more precisely, such network restoration on the level of contemporary requirements) is one of
the tasks set to Russian reality. On the other hand, culture’s translation in its “stationary” and “innovative” dialectical unity supposes learner’s personality development (and in this case!) not according to the principle of “cog in the machine” of social production, having no other interests but exceptionally vital… And this means that even at this level native language (as well as a foreign one, depending on production priorities in this or that sphere), national and world literature, psychology and many other socio-humanistic disciplines will be in great demand. Otherwise society will get not a specialist of “operating level”, but a disposable consumer whose life can become not only a form of spiritual hibernation, but also a foundation for development of rather concrete forms of social disease (from crime level growth to the number of suicides growth).

It means that it is possible to suppose that “high” level of education professions will be demanded by society. Though not bringing direct momentary effect (net profit, etc.), at least, they amortize social disbalances, soften disproportions and smooth out dysfunctions of social organism’s existence.

It should be emphasized that in societies of different types (as in the West, so in Russia) such problems appeared and were solved even earlier. For example, in the USA at the state level works the program of encouraging of young talented people who are ready to study, master new knowledge requiring systematic development of personal and professional qualities. We can take as an example southern American states where one can have increase “for mathematics studying” at nonmathematical faculties of universities: the charge for education is reduced by a sum of approximately 10 000 dollars in case if a student is going to take an exam in mathematics. The flexible system of grants allows taking part in the competition to obtain grants and thus partially or completely set oneself free from the charge. Self-maintenance during the years of education by means of these grants is not always sufficient. Nevertheless, an opportunity to participate in designing of some scientific project creates conditions for getting an independent source of income covering personal accommodation and board expenses. If a student doesn’t have a calling for scientific activity, it is not shameful for him to earn his living working at “of no prestige” positions of a salesman or waiter.

In Russia the program of selection of talented young men from “out-of-the-way place” for their further education in prestigious higher educational institutions of the country has existed since the Soviet period. If earlier only MIFI and Moscow Physics – and- technology University allotted money to this program, now almost all the higher educational institutions are forced “to secure their rear” working with school-leavers by means of collaboration programs “school-higher educational institution” (by organizing academic competitions, sections and other forms of schoolchildren’s involving into educational space of their future education potential environment). Moscow State University today is the leader in organizing such events. The TV quiz show “Umniki & Umnitsy” also deserves words of praise, for its winners get an opportunity to enter MGIMO without taking exams.

In essence, suchlike events realize the very project method that has already been mentioned. Initial format of different contests on local, municipal, regional, All-Russian or international level is the following: a schoolchild under teacher’s supervision (sometimes – together with parents and/ or with higher educational institution instructor) makes some interesting to him and of current importance research; then he submits this research to jurors’ consideration.

It should be noted that according to the statistics it is by parents together with children that most part of such projects is performed (up to 90% of supervisors are teachers, instructors and researchers. As a rule, it is parents who

- are aware of such competitions;
• realize their value for further overcoming of “the filters” that are at the entrance to higher educational institution (under other equal conditions preference is given to school-leavers that have good “portfolio”, i.e. a set of commendations and diplomas for winning or at least participating in different contests and academic competitions);

• are able to interest the child by offered project, motivate him to take part in rather labour-intensive work, new for him and therefore (at least at the beginning) of heightened psychological complexity threshold, etc.

What is remarkable is that from the organizers’ side there is no hampering parents’ participation, on the contrary – it is encouraged. As a juror of some of such contests I can confirm with confidence the absence of “programmed” winnings: existing criteria of selection and conscientious experts allow various parameters to be taken into account (from embodiment of really significant values in the project to the skills of teamwork and accomplishing of work). Besides live events there are remote contests (“Russkiy medvezhonok”). For relatively small charge to organizers (50 rubles – approximately 2 dollars) children write a paper in which non-standard tasks on different subjects are collected. These tasks slightly exceed the level of initial material that is to be thoroughly studied according to the program. In essence it is one of the most precise and conscientious system of testing schoolchildren’s real knowledge. Unlike, by the way, State Final Certification – end-year exam (after 9 forms) to upper secondary forms and Unified State Final Exam – final examination on the course of secondary school in which the elements of surplus formalism and “subjectivity” at preparing tests only add to corruptibility picture of certain organizations that lobby introduction of this testing system. Scandals and “cause célèbre” connected with the abovementioned abuses outrage Russian public every year. However, complete overcoming of these phenomena in the existing situation seems to be unlikely: commercialized education is a fertile field for those who are fond of “catching fish in muddy water”. From this point of view the system of contests and academic competitions acts as educational institutions atmosphere “purifier” as it makes at least some teachers reconsider their psychological aims that are realized in the process of teaching of his or that subject. Thus, today the teacher is not set the task to “teach” – “to educate” will just be enough. It is so because to fulfill some exceptionally commercial task you don’t need to inspire and encourage a child that can’t grasp this or that material. Vice versa, you will need to convince him that without additional paid classes (even if officially paid) in no way will he master the wisdom of fractions multiplication or literary analysis of I.S. Turgenev’s work “Mu-Mu”. The statements “You are incapable”, “Not everyone needs mathematics” (it is in primary school!) and so on become refrains. Project method “smashes” suchlike aims. By the way, these aims are not always the consequence of systematic ill-intentioned influence on children. More often it is “just” a consequence of general unwholesome atmosphere existing in moral consciousness of narrow minded “new school” representatives.

In the process of preparation and realization of a project every child, in accordance with his initial level (not all children are “ready-made” geniuses) and made efforts, “diligence”, he must show definite result. Here it logically makes no sense “to drag out” the solution of the issue demonstrating the necessity of additional “refueling of the car” that “otherwise won’t drive”. It is exactly vice versa – the faster and more efficient, “with full devotion”, the small collective of children and adults, “small research group”, will work, the more weighty will be the “prize” in the form work completion and its presentation at competitive selection. Even if a research (on history of native town, for example) in fact is done mainly by a teacher, and a child is merely “crammed” to represent it in the context of “school conference” – the result of pedagogical influence is not “null”. Mastering the material, “cramming” it a schoolchild is preparing for the answers to the questions, i.e. examines main scientific problems that usually are even not considered during the lesson. The lesson is usually reduced to presentation of pages from student’s book on history on “interactive” board and their voicing by the teacher…
Thus, project method not only “makes healthier” the commercialized atmosphere of school education, but also convincingly shows children the specificity of highly qualified labour connected with the necessity of obtaining higher education:

- this labour requires full devotion;
- it allows getting satisfaction to which there are no analogues among known pleasures of hedonistic type;
- it accustoms to work in team (Litvak 2012:235);
- it interconnects generations orienting on mastering of created “before you”;
- it gives you an opportunity “to make your presence felt” making emphasis on achievement of new results, in which the rout of your own search, its grounds become a socially (and sometimes scientifically) significant phenomenon.

“Club” projects of schoolchildren-school-leavers, which are popular nowadays in city environment as live events and in some schools of towns and rural area as remote or correspondence events, is the step towards development of these value guiding lines enabling to rise prestige of higher educational institution. Being included “beforehand” into problematic (higher educational institution, not “school-boyish” in type presentation) mastering of material, schoolchildren thus:

- have additional sphere to meet the common spirit and definite methods of research activity,
- develop ability to critical thinking (that is nearly “killed” by the testing system of knowledge quality control),
- get an opportunity of prospective “business’ communication, to put it simpler, interesting professional communication enriching them by meeting with bearers of high level scientific consciousness, and the above mentioned bearers – with “fresh insight” into well-known problems.

At this stage, in essence, skills can be formed that are necessary for involving the future student into the system of higher education science from the first days in the educational space of higher educational institution. As practice shows, considered choice of higher educational institution and active participation in scientific projects today is one of the urgent tasks set to students and, logically, to administrative-pedagogical collective of higher educational institutions. The enrollment of learners to higher educational institutions somehow can be stimulated in the direction of improvement of indices “at entrance”, whereas the problem of motivated attitude to education is one of the most difficult to solve among the students of full time form of study. Taking education in higher educational institution as some kind of a prize won as a result of extra strenuous training during school years(or paid from parents purse), part of Bachelor's programme students doesn't consider education in higher educational institution a process requiring mastering of new techniques of education, not to mention new knowledge. The students, that got high grades at Unified State Exam at times reproach teachers with incompetence at hearing unknown words. The illustrative example: a linguist, Candidate of Science, one of acknowledged experts in the field of the Russian language and at the sometime a teacher giving lessons of logic to lawyers used professional term unknown to one of his students. The student without even a shade of humor put to shame the teacher, explaining that he had obtained 98 marks at Unified State Exam in the Russian language (existing maximum in this system is 100 marks). That is why if he, a freshmen, doesn't know such term - it means it doesn't exist...
The statistics that is in my disposition shows the following proportion of motivation of lawyer students of the 1t course (with advanced study of 2 foreign languages) in its relation to the prospect of working in the chosen profession:

Figure 1.

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Row 1 (blue color) shows the number of students having decided to work in the future in the chosen profession; row 2 (red) – the number of those who are definitely not going to this. The green light (row 3) marks “indecisive ones” those who don't exclude for themselves employment according to their speciality and on the other land, don't mind getting another job, not connected with the profession directly (for example the position of a corporation's leader or his assistant). Higher educational institution that held this research is considered as one of prestigious; perhaps that is why the index of “indecisive ones” here is rather high. At different number and nationality make up of academic groups, percentage proportion between several sectors of preferences, as we can see, remains approximately the same.

In a little bit different way preferences are distributed depending on a chosen profession. Thus, in prestigious economics higher educational institution of Moscow preferences distribution is the following (data from 2011/2012 academic year):

Figure 2.
Rows of preferences on the given diagram remain the same as in Fig. 1 – work in speciality is preferable (blue color); excluded (red); not excluded but not necessary (green). At this lawyers (freshmen) also get specialization in the field of political science (until advanced study of foreign language); nationality make-up of both researched groups: 90% - representatives of Northern Caucasian republics and Transcaucasia. During oral survey regardless of progress students expressed firm conviction in the fact that after graduating from higher educational institution they will work as managers in the firms belonging to their relatives or parents.

Economists (2 course) (data about them is presented in table 2) – students of 2 elite groups studying economical mathematics with advanced study of one foreign language. At that in each there are people that have headed their own enterprise for along time and successfully (by 2 people) and those who have worked in specialization “economist” in a bank, as well. In both groups persons that have reported they are further not going to work speciality are also “engaged”: in first case it is an employee of sports center of the same higher educational institution; in the second – it computer security specialist, the head of the corresponding department in one of private banks of Moscow. Nationality make-up includes representatives of different peoples living on the territory of the Russian Federation (with the exception of Northern Caucasus and Transcaucasia).

Comparison of the obtained information enables to suppose that, regardless of knowledge of a foreign language, lawyers are more “attached” to the profession and they are receiving and more oriented on the prospect of taking up executive positions. As the students explain, juridical education will help them in this case to avoid machinations from their own subordinates. On the contrary, economists-mathematicians are involved into operating process (mainly in their own immediate profession) already during the process of education. At that their being in demand is determined not by “technical” abilities in the field of accounting but the very skills of strategic and tactical planning of conducting financial transactions and other operations enabling to increase firm's profits, decrease costs and “play” in perspective economy development areas.

“Unofficial” surveys, analogous to ones described above, having been conducted in less prestigious higher educational institutions (for example in pedagogical institutes of Moscow and Tula) usually show the increase in number of “renunciators” to whom the whole interest encloses in availably of the Diploma of Higher education itself and not its definite specialization but, admittedly, without aspiration to taking up executive positions.
It should be emphasized that the given absolute indices correspond to percentage ratio with precision to within 8-12% (selection on similar faculties of different higher educational institutes). At that the biggest “plus” in inventions to work in the future directly in specialty give freshmen-economists and journalists; if to speak about the least one – it is among teachers and political scientists.

Thus, higher education is perceived by most part of students as “a permit to paradise” of high and middling paid positions. Partly such policy can work in positive way: educability as it is the quality, indeed, rather and mainly in demand in the dynamic working environment engulfed by modernization trends. However absence of professionalism in whatever sphere just reduces educability index emphasizing only availability of promptness in obeying and absence of their own initiative. For contemporary working environment the growth of such indices is a danger signal, for lacking initiative and intellectual agility blind performers are hindrance for introduction of innovation technological schemes. The demand’s sphere of such “diplomas” is extremely narrow. Here has place “order” political rather than economical: we speak not about formation of dynamically developing system of social production but about formation of “obedient” electorate. It will not be a revelation to state that in contemporary information society for a representative of “middle ranking” production (as it is for it that bachelors are supposed to be trained) science in “prudent” usage of own and someone’s initiative is almost the main condition of a specialist's competence.

The problem of increasing of interest in acquiring knowledge, abilities and skills in the chosen speciality can be stimulated by creation of initiative research groups in which, at an adequate level, students accomplish interesting to them scientific and applied tasks starting from the first year of education. For example, they become familiar with specificity of different states legal systems in the language of a studied country. All this is carried out in the context of direct communication with representatives of these states, which enables to asses juridical and legal reality of other countries, its deference from Russian reality, etc.

The joy given to a bachelor student by his entrance can under some conditions last up to the end of education in Master's degree programme and even Post-graduate studies. Correspondingly “at the output” one gets a specialist that is absolutely not interested in essential content of his profession. The object of his interest is, at best, a pecuniary recompense for performed work or career advancement – the motivation that make sense only presence of purposeful professional motivation. In certain cases (“difficult” and substantial diploma) out of this contingent appear employees of management sphere and senior executives of other economics and politics branches. I suppose that the situation can and must be changed at the level of the first - second years of education. This opportunity won't be missed only in the case when a student gets a sphere of his own interest as the field of purposeful self-assertion. Project method is one of the ways to create such motivation.

Master's degree programme in contemporary Russian interpretation is time spent on “perfecting” knowledge acquired in Bachelor's programme. There are more academic hours for independent work in this programme. Consequently, there is less of “schoolboysh” education to special courses of study. That is why to significant part of Master’s training course students that haven't learnt to work independently, Master's degree programme is just another “serving” of duty “to stand in a queue for diploma”. Management job, “by definition” fully corresponding only the level of postgraduate's training, is a “delicious titbit”. However, good quality education here
should really be supplemented with parallel occupational work. Not rarely coordination of employers and educational structures efforts with all this going on not only is not supposed but is also absent in foreseeable prospect: an employer “re-trains” an employee performing the function of disavowal of acquired knowledge value. Obtaining of diploma postponed to 2 additional years is psychologically perceived as a vexatious obstacle in the way of achieving set goals of career and material welfare.

In this case project method is one of the simplest ways of connection of production and educational institutions. Define part of future graduate students solves this problem by their active involvement at their last year into pedagogical practice and thus – after obtaining diploma – replenishing ranks of academic teaching staff of higher educational institutes themselves. Nevertheless the solution of these tasks just partly covers the general task of graduate students' employment oriented on getting a job according to acquired high qualification.

I suppose that among the prospective directions for creation and realization of suchlike projects are various production associations that coordinate their personnel plans with higher educational institution organizations at purposeful level. The example is “Day of career” in MGIMO (U) organized by large firms the heads of which are from amongst of graduates of the University and therefore get their bearings well in possible “advantages” and “disadvantages” of future employees. However one should not count out one more “reproductive-educational” back up that is assignment of part of graduates to educational organizations of school level. The practice of no prestige today but which was widespread earlier in the USSR, in essence, is in rather a great demand in case if Russia adopts the script of development and not of stagnation with subsequent decay. The contribution to school education is the contribution to the future. It will be rewarded with the next generation. But if not to contribute or do it in “an impaired” way (and significant impairment is especially observed in periods of destabilization and decrease of secondary education general level) then the country is deprived of the future. Certain steps are being made in this direction. Thus, the level of teachers’ salaries in some regions surpasses real salaries of staff.

Concealed competition of school and higher educational institution, that is peculiar to contemporary stage of their cooperation in the Russian Federation, reveals itself not only in comparison of standard of living and income in these spheres (very often – not in favour of higher educational institutions), but also in the absence of aim at collaboration. This peculiarity is inherent in the selfsame system of contrasting test method of knowledge quality control used “at the output” of school education – and content (still!) system of marks adopted in higher educational institution. Complete conversion of higher educational institutions to similar system of marks will lead to students’ full loss of ability to think, analyze situations and make nontrivial decisions. This gap in the system “school – higher educational institution” can also be replenished by active involvement of teachers into collaboration with higher educational institution organizations. Projects and their presentation, different kinds of conferences and other means of professional communication in no ways are “chatter” as some unqualified “effective managers” of education suspect but a means of professional communication: exchange of views, demonstration of achievements and their critical analysis. All this composes the essential condition for professional development of pedagogical staff realizes innovation potential of educational sphere and allows revealing of teachers’ creative abilities. Without revealing and developing of the abovementioned abilities it makes no sense to speak about full value school education.

So, on the one hand, there is involvement of higher educational institutions teachers into school education space and involvement of school teachers into the space of joint discussion and solution of professional educative and educational and pedagogic tasks - on the other. They both
allow compensating existing “gaps”. Projects of this kind already exist and are realized. Among them there is collaboration of large chemical concerns (Uralkhim), chemistry and biology faculties of State Moscow University with Moscow school – Educational centre №1485. Also we reckon among such projects conducting joint events by teachers of this school and teachers of MGIMO University’s Philosophy Chair, for example, joint discussion of urgent problems of school and higher education coordination at MGIMO Science Days held in April of 2013.

Today in Russia the question of creation of the so-called “third step” of education is raised as a separate entry in the reform of higher education. It is supposed to be an analogue to contemporary Post Graduate Study, “the output” of which will enclose in creation of stratum of people having obtained Doctor’s degree of “new format”. As in the “Education Act” for the moment in this question there are still a lot of uncertainties (2013: http://www.zakonrf.info/zakon-ob-obrazovaniil/) then attention should be focused on those points on which organizational decisions are already made. In particular it is about “full-format” occupation of learners at this stage, i. e. it is not only about their mastering of relevant interactive programs (which results in obtaining the certificate of acquiring higher level qualification in this field), but also about the prospect (existing just for some of learners) to participate in scientific subject matter work getting salary for it and opportunity of subsequent defense of full-value scientific paper.

The last of the abovementioned ones variant of scientific work organization represents itself nothing else than project method variation applied to the third stage of education. But collaboration in this field is supposed to be implemented not only with colleagues – staff of higher educational institution, but also with Master’s training course students trained in this (or similar) direction. In essence, here we speak about tutorial system. Tutorage is the idea that hardly makes its way in the system of Russian education; however, without it the rational organization of educational process is, obviously, impossible.

The important part of training and successful implementation of forethought innovation is creation of adequate interrelated programmes gathered on the modular principle. The “module principle” implies not “brevity” and “conciseness” of the read curriculums, where the speed of subjects mastering is such that students don’t manage to understand its essence and “the reporting form” – a credit or exam –is already to come. It is supposed that “constructive elements” of the course in the form of separate programmes, firstly, will be regularly updated; secondly, their “assemble” itself will depend on practical tasks set by the given educational-scientific collective.

For example, while composing the plan of academic disciplines in the programme “Culturology”, according to this format it is supposed to organize advanced study of the most significant linguocultures on the regional principle (Gurevich 2008: 62). However, depending on the tasks set to a group of researches, such approach should be supplemented with advanced study of the region (and its cultural peculiarities) which is predominantly studied in the context of suggested by them research project. Realization of general purposes of this kind, undoubtedly, will be corrected in the course of concrete scientific designs implementation. One thing is clear – project method to a considerable degree reproduces the experience of rather familiar scientific work methods having produced a great effect already in the soviet period. Selected exceptionally for the reasons of scientific efficiency and psychological compatibility – regardless of their sex, age and “ranks”, scientific collective in its essential content not that much differs from “boxes”, design departments of recent past and “mickey-mouse outfits” of pre-war and post-war periods. It is obvious that not only positive but also negative sides of scientific work organization according to this principle should be taken into account together with the experience of the abovementioned organizations.
Innovation potential of such collectives is difficult to overestimate. It will obviously not only increase but also decrease; that is why the type of “modular construction” described above should also spread to organizational forms used at creating collectives like this. Flexible system of financing that guarantees a minimum for any well-reasoned research and maximum for one reasoned utmost convincingly – is one of the ways to support “modest beginners” and “to sideline” immodest “seasoned” members of scientific projects. Thus, the creation process of conditions for realization of scientific tasks can’t fail to take into account real opportunities that exist in higher educational institutions for realization of relevant ideas. Joint projects of chairs, interested in it bachelors, prospective Master’s training course students and enthusiastic post graduates are a serious organizational-cadre task. This task can be supervised only by experienced specialists in the field of scientific policy, the scientists that are able to lead, to enthrall by the activity they are involved in, i.e. real heads of scientific schools and trends supported by the opportunities of administrative and financial and organizational source. It would be an inexcusable naivety to consider the solution of these tasks exclusively a matter of “efficient management”. Only high class professionals can combine in one person ability and willingness to solution of so complicated and multilevel tasks. From here follows one more necessary requirement: existing today in main structural subdivisions of Russian higher educational institutions, human resources potential of administration should mainly be preserved for solution of set tasks. It is relevant to remember a Russian proverb: one does not change horses in midstream. That is why the idea according to which innovation trends can be reinforced simply by having changed staff ratio in higher educational institutions to the following one: 70 % of young Doctors of Science at the age of up to 30 years, the rest are older – is an idea extremely destructive for the whole system in general. Wise manager will not “suppress” young Doctors as dynamic young men will spare him the solution of those problems that he (owing to technical and psychological reasons) himself finds difficulty in coping with….

Nevertheless without the support – by means of advice or participation - of older generation scientists and administrators young scientists are doomed to committing “superfluous” mistakes and reinvent the wheel where it can easily be avoided. Lack of foresight while conducting cadre arrangement is one of the most “high-priced” mistakes among all possible. It should also be considered when taking as a guide for action concrete strategies of higher educational institutions development at contemporary stage of Russian reforms of higher education.

Taking into account the experience of Western countries will help to realize prospective projects. But it should be reminded that the aspiration to homogenize educational area around the world at any price is yet another chimera which will cost a fortune to national educational systems. At that the solution of this problem, as it seems to me, lies aside from introduction of compulsory “Orthodoxy courses” in all educational institutions. Significantly great effect (including on the acquaintance with Orthodox culture) will produce, from my point of view, highly qualified people’s invitation to collaboration on the basis of project method. This group of people consists of specialists in their field that are capable of transmitting together with high professionalism also the high culture of thinking. Without involvement into pedagogical process (at all its stages) of persons of such scale one can’t even dream about full value realization of this project method. Even if such person will just be a visiting Professor it still makes sense to spend money on invitation of this person even though for a comparatively short time. I suppose, it is this meaning that is put into the requirement of visiting professorate’s presence by creators of Russian innovative projects in the field of higher education. Admittedly, one should not forget about the fact that Russian professors by no means should be referred to as “inexpensive teachers”. “Inexpensive” – because they are insiders? It is an absurd that can attract to collaboration not really interesting and advanced people but swindlers that are ready to go anywhere in chase of rich pickings. Visiting professorate’s programme, in the context of the abovementioned,
should be implemented on parity basis: professors from Russia in exchange for partners from abroad. I do not doubt that there are somebody and something for exchange.

Research projects are the future of not only school but also of higher educational institution, no matter in which functioning forms they would develop (either it is a group of students, Master’s training course students and post graduates, performing developments under supervision of a concrete professor, or it is a club in which the same structural elements of educational field are represented). But, if truth to be told, this positive script of the positive future will fully be realized only in case if targeting on really dynamic innovations (and not their imitation) pushes its way through educational system.

Reference list:


Bibliographic reference. Margarita Veniaminovna Silantyeva – is a Doctor of Philosophy (thesis “Existential dialectics of Nikolai Berdyaev as philosophical method”, 2005), professor. Works at the chair of Philosophy in MGIMO (University), runs the programme “philosophy of culture and culturology”. At the same time is in charge of the chair of Philosophy in State Academy of Slavonic Culture. Gives courses: “Philosophy”, “Logics”, “History of Russian philosophy”, “Ethics”.