Marian Bybluk

Kujawsko-Pomorska Szkoła Wyższa, Bydgoszcz

Kolegium Jagiellońskie – Toruńska Szkoła Wyższa, Toruń

THE DIRECTIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RUSSIAN SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Keywords: Russia, system, education, student

Abstract

The article entitled *The Directions of the Development of the Russian System of Education in the 21st century* came into existence as a result of the continuation of research on the Russian education initiated with publishing of the series of articles in the 1990s as well as the book *Democratic Transformation of Education in Russia*, Krakow 2003. The first section of this article is devoted to the current structure of Russian education emphasizing its differences while comparing it to Polish education. The second section is a critical analysis of the state of Russian education at its all levels during the first two decades of the 21st cent., taking into account the changes the system has undergone since the period of Perestroika (1985-1989). The analysis is conducted from the perspective of the social situation of Russia undergoing disadvantageous demographic transformations, with the education influenced to a great extent by ineffective economy as well as Russia's accession to the Bologna Accords. The final section presents the tendencies of the development of the Russian system of education taking into consideration its unfavorable socio-economic conditions and the lack of stabilization in the country. These are the main directions of the development of global and specific character, resulting from multicultural needs of citizens of this multinational state.

Introduction

Russian education is a living organism which has been developing along with the country. Both its successes and failures were reflected like in a mirror at the same time affecting socio-economic as well as cultural development of Russia. The Soviet period in the history of education, which left numerous problems but also remarkable achievements, was extremely complex and full of contradictions. The contemporary period of the first two decades of the 21st century is also to some extent dramatic and ambiguous. Russia is currently un-

dergoing the increasing, second and more dangerous demographic wave, which indicates disease within the Russian society (alcohol addiction, the lack of taking care of health, high death rate, the decrease in marriages, disintegration of families, low birth rate, etc.) The forecasts of demographers claiming that the number of citizens of the country will be falling by 500–750 thousand annually and will decrease by 40 million throughout half of the century, are becoming reality (Bybluk, 2003). The question of demography has thus become the most vital issue in Russia, unknown to such extent in the history of human kind. In the situation of

ageing and slow extinction of Russian citizens, i.e. the significant decrease of human resources and their potential, structural changes in education are not enough. If this trend in the dying out empire will not be reversed, it will inevitably lead to the catastrophic fate of educational Russia. The symptoms of such a situation are already visible. The shrinking of education is taking place, which results in seeking new adaptable solutions of post-industrial character, perceiving various solutions of educational issues. One of them being quality changes achieved by restructuring of education according to Bologna Accord accepted by Russia. The article attempts at presenting the current state of functioning of the Russian system of education and determine further directions of its development.

The structure of Russian education

While presenting the structure of the system of education we will pay attention to some differences in comparison to Polish system, although the educational stages are identical. A multi-stage structure came into existence in consequence of legally granted access to education, assuming the issue of leveling the opportunity of a start for children from various social groups and backgrounds.

The first stage **pre-school education**, facultative, for children between the ages of 2 and 6–7. Apart from kindergartens, as a separate institution and so called “zero grades” at schools, the care and educational activities are also performed by special center of the early development. The first time in 80 years their existence, in 2008 Russian kindergartens were deprived of central financing which forced local authorities to introduce a necessary fee for kindergarten, yet with discounts of 20 to 70%. The weakness of this stage of education, which appeared due to economic problems of the country, is a significant limitation of the opportunity for young couples’ offspring to take advantage of kindergarten education, as well as lowering the level of work of these institutions because of low earnings of kindergarten teachers and employing unskilled workers.

In the secondary education there are three stages:

- a) **early school education** starting at the age of 6–7 and lasting for four years. It is a part of secondary school, and in small villages it is a separate kind of school called primary school;
- b) **elementary education** for students over the age

of 10 who graduated from primary school or the fourth grade and go to a secondary school lasting five years. They get a certificate after the ninth grade;

- c) **incomplete secondary school** and they can continue education in the 10th grade in this school or secondary, middle or technical school;
- d) **complete secondary education**, which lasts two years in secondary or middle school, which ends with final exams and acquiring a certificate of maturity.

It is worth mentioning that in general education there are two systems of dividing a school year:

1. division of a school year into four periods ending with final marks, summer holidays and breaks—autumn, winter, and spring,
2. division into three periods—terms divided into five educational blocks with week-long breaks and summer holidays between blocs III and I.

At this stage of education final exams are obligatory, and after the ninth grade the exams in some subjects. The school week is six days long (Sunday is a day off), and students have 4–7 45 minutes long lessons daily or five days long with 9 35 to 40 minutes long lessons. Like in Polish schools, students get homework, except first grades depending on teacher’s decision. It is obligatory to complete nine-year long education. The education is continued in a complete secondary school, in a vocational secondary school or technical school, with the final exam at the end (in Russian *attestat zrelosti*). Students take so called homogenous state exam (in Russian *jedinyj gosudarstwiennyj egzamen*). As an obligatory one this exam is the basis of a state attestation (assessment) of secondary school graduates. Recently, the network of all-day (in Russian *połnogo dnia*) schools started to develop in Russia, where apart from regular lessons there is a wide range of extracurricular activities, various forms of additional education. Schools provide additional paid educational services. This stage of education is characterized with additional education of children (in Russian *dopolnitelnoje obrazowanije*): music, art, sport, etc, which does not fulfill general educational objectives, but develops creative potential of students.

Vocational education plays significant part in the structure of the Russian system of education:

- a) **elementary vocational school** where after finishing ninth or eleventh grade students become skilled workers;

- b) **secondary vocational school** (technical or colleges) with a final exam.

At academic level there are universities, academies or institutes (academic vocational schools). Graduates of these schools get a baccalaureate degree after four years of studying (in Russian *bakalawra*), after five years a degree of specialist, and after six years a master degree. Academic education in most cases is state but there are more and more private ones. Like in Poland, the structure of the Russian system of education is completed with the **post-graduate level** (Górecka, 2006).

The highs and lows of the Russian system of education

The process of autonomisation of Russian secondary education began with passing the act "On education" (1996). It was then that schools acquired broad opportunities of adaptation for the educational needs of recipients. Nowadays, most of secondary schools got the status of legal subjects within this process.

The autonomy was accompanied by a quick variant development. There appeared general schools with deepened teaching of particular subjects, the above mentioned *liceum* and *gimnazjum*, and in vocational education-vocational *liceum* and colleges. The network of vocational schools has become available even for inhabitants of the most remote parts of the country. There also appeared such care and education institutions like compensation, health, development centres, etc. The phenomenon of variants in education was enriched with new plans and curricula of education, altered every couple of years, which encouraged the possibility of choosing the level and type of educational institution by students as well as orienting education at the needs of job market to a greater extent (Nowikow, 2000).

Undergoing demographic changes are a significant factor influencing the state of the system of education in Russia. Average number of students per teacher in public schools has decreased during the last decade by two students and was 14 students. Throughout the last twenty years the number of schools has decreased by 23 thousand and in 2010 was 46.5 thousand, and the number of students dropped by 6.5 million at the same time. It resulted from the decrease in total fertility rate to 1.3, although this state is slightly verified with the increasing migration. Moreover, there is a significant difference in the population of children and the youth

attending schools depending on the region. And so, e.g. in Ingushetia the percentage of school attending is three times higher than in Leningrad or Moscow districts.

The decreasing number of students at general and vocational schools has resulted in possibility limiting teachers' overtime, significant staff regulations, improvements in staff structure (schools employ a lot of retired teachers), partial decrease in unemployment rate among teachers by preserving full-time work places, improvement of didactics quality, quitting the competition system at the recruitment to vocational schools, limiting school fees. At the same time it is possible at the regional level to: develop various types of extracurricular and facultative activities, as well as improve the material and didactic situation of schools, and in many cases elimination of the second or even third shift on a school day.

The drawbacks of a decreasing number of children and the youth include, apart from reduction in the number of schools, establishing small, economically unjustified schools, especially in the countryside, whose number currently reaches 30 thousand. With the aim of reducing these consequences complexes of "school-kindergarten" come into existence, or the centres of continuous education or their branches founded on the basis occupied previously by schools (the necessity of developing qualifications and re-qualification of several million employees with vocational education).

The quantity changes have influenced the whole system of education: from kindergarten to academic level. In 2010 5.4 million children participated in kindergarten education (while in 1991 8.4 million), in that time the number of kindergartens decreased by 32 thousand and the process is still in progress. Kindergartens are closed when they are overtaken by municipal authorities, but also due to the low birth rate and impoverishing of society. In order to eliminate the negative consequences of limiting institutional care over small children various forms of corrective and pedagogic assistance are established for children not attending kindergarten as well as the process of including kindergarten children to school structures ("zero" grade).

Similar changes have appeared in general schools. The overall number of schools have decreased by 30% during the last two decades. The varied network of general education included in 2011 1554 state and non-state *gimnazja* and 1116 *licea*. In state *gimnazja* and *licea*, 792 students were educated, whereas in non-state ones 158-83.5 thousand. Each year the number

of students of these schools decreased on average by 40 thousand. The decreasing number of students resulted in better access to text books and other school equipment. On the other hand, due to demonopolization of school publishers the circulation of text books had systematically increased-over 2000 in 2015, and overall circulation exceeded 100 million. There also took place the updating of general education content. The content of humanities changed essentially; the wider range of religious, philosophical, ethical and legal issues appeared as well as new subjects (ICT, ecology, the basics of life protection, etc.) Throughout the whole period of education at general school students take advantage of additional educational services, which are paid. The introduction of a facultative "zero grade" for the oldest children at kindergarten age both in kindergarten and school is a novelty in the structure. It means that in practice school education has been prolonged to twelve years. specialising school provides students with an opportunity to choose the trajectory of acquiring knowledge, fulfilling one's individual educational needs. This aim is achieved by introducing the broad extent of facultative subjects. An appropriate mechanism makes it possible for students to combine education in different kinds of schools, not only general, but also extramural, intramural-extramural, or complementary. In order to protect students' health the imposition of students with education is lowered by introduction of new, health-preserving educational technologies, the changes in the content of the state educational standard (in school year 2005/2006 new modified standards) (Połonskij, 2007).

Although people in Russia are aware of the importance of ICT and its influence on the state economy as well as the quality of life and security of society, Russian education has had a significant delay in this matter. The delay in the participation of ICT in education was compensated thanks to the introduction of a federal, special-purpose program of the government: "The development of the homogenous educational ICT environment between 2001 and 2005". It was already between 2001 and 2002 that the village schools were equipped in computer classrooms. Around 15 thousand of such schools located the furthest from urban centres acquired sputnik connection, thanks to which they were able to squelch educational programs once a week. In 2004 all school libraries got equipped in computer sets and multimedia facilities, and in 20 regions all schools acquired the Internet connections, whereas since 2005 the further regions. (Litwincew, 2005). The

introduction of ICT to the school environment resulted in the increase of teachers' interest in taking advantage the technology in the process of education. The Internet is widely used in didactics. There has been the growth in the number of educational computer programs in the Russian Language. It is also worth mentioning that there were created 15 electronic educational portals of the ministry of education and science visited daily by circ. 100 thousand people. The remote communication education has developed as well. Schools participate in the whole country remote communication competitions like, "The teacher of the year", "The school of the year", "A modern lesson". In many regions there are remote guided August teaching conferences (before the beginning of a school year) (Bybluk, 2015; Chutorskoj, 2007).

Along with the introduction of ICT to high schools all the schools in Russia received a 100-volume edition of Russian classic literature, and between 2003 and 2005 2-million Rubles worth sports equipment. Additional budget means were spent on equipping most schools with the latest computer, and the teachers got acquainted with the basics of ICT. Bigger schools employed a full-time teacher specialising in ICT.

The introduction of ICT and computers looks better in academic schools (most universities have the access to the computer net); numerous educational programs and electronic libraries are created, the remote communication education is developed, the network infrastructure is being modernized and developed as well as the transfer capacity of channels.

Village schools, however, are the weak part of general education. They make 64% of all schools, and in almost half of them the number of students is below 100. Another weakness is the fact that most teachers are females-85% of the overall number. Some more important problems appear in ethnic education (staff, text books), where students were taught in 32 non-Russian languages, and particular subjects were taught in 78 national languages.

Russian general school functions in poor conditions. Part of schools do not possess indispensable civilization facilities (in the countryside a little over 30%). And so, a quarter of schools do not have central heating, canteens or buffets. The number of children included in the program of supplementary alimentation has also dropped (now 60%). Also students' health condition is deteriorating. 60% of children starting school education have been diagnosed with some health deficien-

cies, 20% present weak psychical immunity. Special education has embraced merely 45% of children and the youth requiring education at special schools. Most children do not have equal opportunities in acquiring education, nor do they have access to good quality education.

Both Russian and foreign studies imply that a significant number of students do not master the current curriculum (in some subjects up to 50%), which required the verification of content and structure of general education. In this respect "The concept of content and structure of general education" has been realised since 2000, which aims at creating new content of teaching within various stages of education as well as school subjects. After several years of work on taking a grip of programs, in the last decade general education has achieved some successes thanks to applying PIRLS, TIMSS and PISA tests. Assessing the quality of reading and comprehension skills students of early elementary grades got the second position in the world in 2011, and the students of the 4th and 8th grades were in the first ten in mathematics and science. According to the ranking of the British company, Economist Intelligence Unit, Russian education got the 8th position in Europe and the 13th in the world.

Vocational education also did quite well in the last decade, although it was frequently connected with inefficient industry. The network of a new type of schools was established-vocational *liceum* educating highly skilled workers. Following the needs of job market currently vocational training, which is now the responsibility of Russian Federation subjects, takes place in 300 integrated professions (previously there were 1200 specialised professions). In this type of education there have been introduced state standards of education including amongst the others new curricula.

In vocational colleges one may observe the dynamic increase in both recruitment, as well as the number of students, with 30% of overall number paying for their education. The largest increase in the number of students had place in economic and humanities, as opposed to technical and agricultural specializations. The lack of material and didactic base is a weakness of vocational colleges, as well as the profile structure of the middle level specialists and their territorial placement-for the needs of educated ones and the fields of work. Russian vocational education has been undergoing a significant period of regionalisation since 1992. In 2005 already over 90% of vocational schools and

55% of vocational colleges were overtaken by subjects of Russian Federation (Litwincew, 2005). A difficult process of restructurisation of vocational schools network, optimisation of specialisations and preparation of work staff necessary for regions is currently being conducted. This process is accompanied with various imperfections referring to the access to education, increasing its quality and effectiveness. Additional mechanisms of stimulating social partnership between vocational schools and undertakings of various forms of ownership are being searched for to maintain the material base of 6.5 thousand vocational schools, conducting production apprenticeship, and preparing high class specialists. These changes are forced by competition in national economy, new production and information technologies which require the preparation of employees with higher qualifications than the ones of vocational schools and *liceum* graduates, 50% of whom cannot find employment. In common opinion developing vocational education does not contribute in any way to the economic rise of the state even though a third of students start vocational schools after finishing primary school (Nowikow, 2008).

A significant increase in the network of academic schools in Russia as well as in the number of students in recent years had both advantages and disadvantages. Taking into account the fact that since 2008 the number of students has been one and a half times lower, a serious problem has been growing in academic education. The competition recruitment had to be given up which resulted in availability of academic education for everybody who wanted to study, which led to a significant deterioration of the education quality.

As compared to 2000, the admittance to academic education decreased by 25% with the general decrease in the number of students. At the same time, the number of postgraduate and doctoral students has grown (currently 10 million people takes advantages of this form of studies annually). There has also been growth in the need for the second faculty of 0.2-0.8 million people every year, which resulted in the significant increase of social mobility of the employed and creation of conditions to fulfill the demand of work market for skilled specialists. Academic schools also count on the possibility of increasing the number of foreign students, especially from the former post-Soviet republics (Sołodowa, 2012).

The versatility of education in Russia means that since Perestroika times there have been both free and

paid, commercial and non-commercial schools. So called didactic and educational unities are a novelty (e.g. a kindergarten-elementary school-*liceum* -college-academic school) and didactic-scientific-production unities with the participation of science institutions, production plants and other institutions or organizations, as well as schools functioning in the system education-work-education, home schooling, or extramural education.

The significant changes in academic education in Russia took place after signing Bologna Accord, as a result of which Russia acquired the status of a full member of the European Community in the sphere of education. A variety of factors contributed to this situation, e.g. educational policy favouring the development of academic schools, modernisation of education and its results - Russia is the leader in OECD states with the 53.5% of people with university education. It had seven years to apply the fundamental aims and rules of Bologna Accord. Like in the states of European Union there have been a three-stage education in Russia since 2010.

The growing interest of the youth in acquiring academic education and in consequence the significant quantity leap in the development of academic schools led to rate of 327 studying individuals per 10 thousand inhabitants - the highest in the history of academic education. This rate has been growing systematically in recent years (the average of 2.5% annually); the interest of the youth in acquiring academic degree has been increasing. Between 2000 and 2014 circ. 80% of high school graduates began studies.

The analysis of functioning of Russian education within Bologna Club indicates that its requirements have been fulfilled formally. Russian academic schools ought to be recognized in the West, however it appears that the quality of Russian specialists is questioned there. It stems from the fact that the curricula do not meet international standards. When one analyses the data concerning the position of academic schools, the existence of various weaknesses is clearly visible. One of them being the preference of theories, which mostly came into existence in Soviet times, and which do not apply to the preparation of specialists capable of creating innovative solutions associated with the receptive Russian market. The main reason for this state is the poor financing of academic schools which makes it possible for them to barely function. Despite the rise in expenditure for academic education between 2000 and 2013 of as much as 2000% (!) and the decrease in the

number of schools as well as the number of students in recent years, Russian academic schools did not even appeared in the first 100 in the world (in 2014/2015 the best position, 114, was held by the State University of Lomonosov in Moscow) (Sołódowa, 2012; Sadłak, 2007). However, the self-esteem of the system of academic education is on a high level. It still receives giant financing and has no will of changing anything, does not notice its true employer (Gref).

Highly unsatisfactory situation is also present in programming the education in the English language by academic schools. It results in poor inflow of foreign students who could contribute to the budgets, the insufficient supply of practical competences to students, which decreases job opportunities, inability to employ professors from abroad, and generally limiting the possibility of inter - academic issues as the main objective of Bologna Accord. All of the above plus the low level of foreign languages education leads to the decrease in students mobility as well as international rank of Russian diplomas. Another weakness of academic education in Russia worth mentioning is its lack of flexibility and static curricula. In most cases they do not take into account the needs of work market; they lack the openness for new directions of preparing students as well as new fields. The modernisation of academic schools encounters numerous obstacles. Specialists in new technologies and fields take no interest being employed at schools. The low earnings of academic staff, working mostly full time, is sufficient but for the professors of olden times, whereas the young generation specialists do not fancy poorly paid job. It is not a secret that the main reason for studying in Russia is getting prestige or even avoiding military service, rather than acquiring education and qualifications. It can be confirmed by work of recently graduated economists or lawyers working as secretaries, managing sale assistants, etc. Academic education does not stimulate the economic growth of the state but it even slows it down. The sufficient evidence being the situation that while there is the increase in number of young production specialists, at the same time there is the catastrophic shortage of staff. Academic schools produce "clerical small fry" and not highly skilled engineers. It is for instance confirmed by the fact that in the 80s every third airplane was produced in Russia, whereas currently every hundredth at best. Despite this the demand for academic education is considerable, which fuels corruption associated with university admittance and passing exams.

In the last two decades Russian academic schools changed their names. Nowadays most of them are universities and academies, but still they do not prepare for the dynamic market situation, nor do they set high standards for students. They are incapable of competing with western universities since they cannot offer comfortable halls of residence, sports facilities, leisure centres or canteens. Scarce budgets do not allow them to employ eminent western professors. They do not provide either professors or students with the wide access to the Internet, including virtual libraries or online lectures. (Rubin, 2011)

Education at Russian academic schools is strictly connected with the educational potential of this country, making the half of its potential. Academic schools and the structures of the Russian Ministry of education, present in 302 cities, employ circ. 200 thousand academic employees, including 22 thousand professors and doctors after completing postdoctoral research, 96 thousand associate professors and doctors. The most numerous academic staff deals with technical, physics and mathematics, as well as economic sciences. Despite outstanding accomplishments and a lot of conducted classes, the didactic staff of state academic schools are poorly paid. A professor's earnings is merely around 700 USD (2013), i.e. 2/3 of the average earnings in industry. Insufficient budget means also affect the low participation of academic staff in scientific research. Only a quarter of them acquire adequate financing, and the scientists from academic background make barely 5-7% of the overall number of academic staff. It is the consequence of developed structures beyond academic schools which deal mainly with research (institutes of the science academy, science and research institutes, the research institutes of military sector) and of course, limited budget financing in the form of grants obtained by the Ministry of Education and Science. In spite of these objective limitations all studies draw point at the fact that it was academic schools that were the first to appreciate the issues of innovative processes, their role and significance in reforming economics, developing new technologies, creating competitive production taking advantage of the latest technologies. These days there is a developed innovative structure within the academic system including several dozen of technical parks, numerous regional centres for preparing specialists in the field of innovative entrepreneurship, information and analysis centres, the centres of scientific support for entrepreneurship, certification of production and services,

etc. The size of production that comes into existence within the innovative activities of academic school is several times bigger than the budget expenditure meant for this aim. It is worth mentioning that, generally speaking, since the break of the centuries the beyond-budget means that academic schools acquired exceeded the ones deriving from the budget (Chutorskoj, 2007).

Ageing and resignations of members of didactic staff, including the ones from the emigration, is a great problem in the development of academic education. The analysis of the content of the highly qualified staff employed in academic schools under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science proves that the overwhelming group of doctor who have completed postdoctoral research (independent academic employees) is over 50 years old. Beside staff issues, attention is drawn to the lack of prognostic work on the state of the national education, its particular stages, groups of schools, which takes conditions necessary for the development of science and into account the dynamics of economic, demographic and social processes of the social development of the state as well as conditions necessary for the development of science and education (Abramowa, 2005).

When it comes to international cooperation the activities include development of international academic mobility, guaranteeing Russian participation in preparing top specialists for foreign countries as well as in international educational projects and programs.

This cooperation has developed significantly due to intense participation of academic schools since according to current legal regulations they have gained the right for independent international cooperation. Thus it is visible that Russia makes an attempt to regain its position on the international educational market, create modern system of educating foreigners meeting world standards. The majority of students at Russian academic schools comes from the former Soviet republics as well as Asia, Africa and Middle East. Both in Russia and the above mentioned countries Moscow academies are considered to be the most prestigious ones.

The development tendencies of the contemporary Russian education

As a complex social phenomenon education is most frequently perceived through changes it undergoes, the pace in which it adjusts its concepts and a factual edu-

cational policy towards broad social needs. Hence, the phenomenon of permanent reformation of the education system, most often ordered by superior authority, initiated and conducted by the highest rank authorities. It is so, in spite of the fact that every third reform in the world is a failure (Debenvais). Historians of Russian education mention five significant changes in the content and structure of education: in 1804, 1864, 1918 and 1990 (Drzurinskij, 2003), although in the meantime there were numerous attempts to reform the system of education. The last of them-multi-stage reform, lasting throughout the final decade of the previous century, whose foundations had been prepared in the period of Perestroika (1985-1989), was aiming at the establishment of a new model of education, passing from the unified stem of education after the collapse of the totalitarian and ideological control over it, to a versatile system of various objectives, content and organisation of educational process. The first two decades of the 21st cent. meant further changes in the direction of democratic system of education, opening for innovation from abroad, heading towards the improvement of the system efficiency and its universality.

At the beginning of the new century the directions of Russian education development derive from various sources. Their content results mainly from the current situation Russian school is functioning in the second “post-Perestroika” phase of system transformation, which has been shortly sketched in this study. Another source is found in the legal strengthening of education, i.e. the bill On Education in the Russian Federation from 2012 which determines the basic rules of the state policy and legal regulations (chapter 1, art.3). They set:

- a) the priorities of education
- b) the right of every man to education and unacceptability of discrimination in this field
- c) humanistic character of education
- d) the priority of human life and health
- e) the priority of rights and freedoms of an individual
- f) the right to uninhibited development
- g) the shaping of mutual respect, positive attitude towards work, citizenship, patriotism, responsibility, legal culture, ecological approach to taking advantage of the nature.

In no way can we omit historical sources of determining the directions of development-the main ideological assumptions of the Perestroika period and the collapse of communism, created by the Research and

Science Team “School”. These were: democratisation, humanisation and humanitarisation of education, its poli-structural and multi-layer character, diversification and mobility as well as continuity. They were partially reflected in the bill On education from 1992, additionally emphasising the secular character of education and its state and social way of management, at the same time forecasting its development in the future (Bybluk, 2003).

The features of the contemporary stage of the Russian society development determine the meaning and necessity of essential transformations in a wide variety of fields, including education. Solving problems which contemporary Russian society faces depends on the potential possibilities and occurrence of certain tendencies.

The tendency of **humanisation in education** is understood as getting rid of impersonality of school, as focusing on a child, respect for a child, its right to identity. The breach of the damaging approach towards the environment and shaping pro-ecological attitudes is as an equally significant aspect of humanistic education.

Humanism means immanent features of the development tendencies of the education system. Granting children and the youth the adequate level of education, preventing secondary illiteracy, professional self-determination as well as self-fulfillment of an individual, socialisation of the youth, construct an incomplete set of humanistic tasks. Their realisation is still essential and present for the entire education. The development of a student is the main point in the process of education. Its level equals the level of teacher’s work quality.

Humanitarisation of education means its holistic view on the world, particularly the world of culture, the human world; it is the humanisation of knowledge, shaping humanistic thinking; perceived as one of the main means to fill “axiological void”, retreat from the attitude of neglecting a human and his spiritual values, as the source of shaping new social ideology capable of transforming the mentality of the Russian society. These are the actions aiming at guaranteeing the protection against violence at schools, confirming the rules of tolerance and cooperation in the school environment. While teaching humanities it recommends transferring not only information on wars and political events but also on various types and aspects of human activity-trade unions, economy, religion, art, etc. At the same time the current political situation in Russia, reflected in authoritarian activity of the state authori-

ties, the phenomenon of Russian chauvinism, imperial and aggressive attitude towards some countries of the former Soviet block and western states, the lack of self-criticism towards the inhuman consequences of communist period, breaking human rights, do not contribute to the strengthening of humanistic and humanitarian development of the Russian system of education. (Abramowa, 2005).

The tendency of gradual transition to post-industrial society basing on the development and broad **application of ICT** is extremely popular nowadays. It also includes the tendency to increase the cultural and professional level of population by development and popularisation of educational methodologies, means and technologies. Shortly speaking, in order to be capable of facing modern challenges the system of education needs to undergo certain transformations using contemporary information technology. It is necessary to establish information and education oriented environment of open education as well as the remote one, creating the bases of didactic data, electronic versions of text books, and also multi-agencies technologies of educational portals. This complex tendency, referring to human interests and activities, characterises a new era and makes the foundation for solving problems that society is currently facing. The competition of national educational systems has become the key factor in global competition requiring the continuous renewal of technology, faster pace of acquiring innovation, prompt adaptation for the needs and demands of dynamically transforming reality. At the same time, the possibility of gaining high quality education is becoming one of the most significant values in the lives of citizens, a decisive factor of social justice and political stability. Realisation of the strategic aim of the state policy in the field of education, i.e. the increase in the accessibility of high quality education meeting the needs of both society and each individual citizen, assumes solving such priority tasks as: the modernisation of schools as instruments of social development and shaping the mechanism of assessing the quality of educational service; participation in international comparative studies; the creation of the system of continual education; preparing professionals (Griszniawa, 2011; Połat and others, 2001).

Integration and internationalisation are a significant tendency in contemporary Russian education. The integration process means application of contemporary norms and standards in education, science and technology, popularisation of own cultural, science and tech-

nological achievements. The determination and realisation of the state educational standards is an important tendency in the development of education in today's Russia. Integration of education concerns all the stages, while standardisation is associated with the further improvement of versatile education. Curricula ought to include an objective of granting children-emigrants of different cultures and ethnic communities with achieving the language minimum of knowledge as the basis for constructive social integration. The development of education on the basis of multi-cultural background constructs a separate direction in the modernisation of curricula. Religion science classes are of particular significance in the context of multi-cultural issues, since they aim at making students acquainted with world religions, activities of various churches, shaping rational view of the world, but also transferring positive moral values, guaranteeing tolerant and pluralistic thinking in relations between people of different religious views.

The process of integration and internationalisation is also about getting countries closer, creating conditions for shaping unanimous, world educational space. Russia's access to Bologna Accord point at the movement of this country towards the rapprochement of education systems. It is also presumed, that by protecting everything that has been gathered in the system of education, Russia intends to modernise it taking advantage of the world experience. Integration and internationalization of education creates the world market of educational services; new more technologically advanced, open systems of education come into existence, which provide services regardless of distance and state borders. Open education is of significance here that is conducted basing on internet and electronic technologies. This tendency in education corresponds with the tendency of development of continual education, its intensification as well as the development of the rule of cyclicity and the existence of numerous educational levels. (Niejmanow, 2003; Litwincew, 2005).

Instead of summary

The above presented current situation of Russian education on all the levels, along with the prolong consequences of liquidating its Soviet past and efforts to keep up with the advanced western systems of education may indeed remind us of our struggle to raise Polish education to a decent European level, counting on the

advantage of low birth rate and improvement of miserable state finances. Hence, conclusions resulting from the comparison between the present stage of the development and directions of proposed changes in Polish and Russian systems of education might be useful.

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