

# The thorny route

No matter how ambitious the strategies, programs, socio-economic development plans, etc. are, in the end, it is people who decide everything. The distinctive feature of the modern world and economy is the rapid dynamics of processes taking place in them. Previously established ideas and proven practices and approaches to solve various problems and problems are constantly being transformed and updated. The driver and ultimate goal of transformations is Man with his understanding of the processes taking place and with certain specific knowledge and skills, which, naturally, also require constant updating. In such a dynamic world it is hardly possible to train in advance all the skills that will be necessary and in demand in his various activities in the near and even more so in the distant future. In addition, our contemporary, in order to succeed, must not only have knowledge and skills, it is important to be able to generate them.

In this regard, there is an eternal and very difficult question – «what and how to learn? In the author's opinion, two circumstances are fundamentally important in answering it.

The first is the need to understand and reflect the cultural component<sup>1</sup> in the educational process (teaching the skills of modern entrepreneurship is no exception). In this sense, the current desire to technologize education is reminiscent of the well-known process of «coaching» on the eve of exams – whether the notorious Uniform State Exam or a university session. After the test is passed, the «boundary is crossed,» the required grade is obtained, but alas, there is no «enlightenment. At the same time, as modern research<sup>2</sup> shows, «...the explosive nature of the development of technological progress in the West was largely due to changes of a cultural nature. «Culture» influenced the development of technology both through changing

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<sup>1</sup> «Culture is a system of beliefs, values, and preferences that can influence human behavior, transmitted through social interactions (not genetically), and recognized by a certain segment of society.»- P. 8 // Joel Mokyr (2018). Culture of Growth. The Origins of Modern Economy. The Graz Schumpeter Lectures. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press. 2018. 403 p.

<sup>2</sup> P. 7. Op. cit.

attitudes toward the world of natural processes and indirectly through the creation of a system of institutions aimed at stimulating and disseminating useful knowledge. It is now generally accepted that long-term economic transformations cannot be understood without involving the «concept of the role of culture» in understanding how and which ones are meaningful.»

A vivid example of the success of preserving the historical «cultural code» in education is China. In the case of Russia, we have to state that «the use of instruments that have been tested in other countries turned out to be premature and unsuccessful in many respects» (M. V. Kurbatova's paper). In education management, methods such as focusing on formal performance indicators, such as places in various kinds of ratings and widespread «budgeting» have become firmly established. These «observable» and «administrable» evaluation indicators have little to do with solving the social, economic, and political problems of our society.

In their time, the Russian Empire and the USSR created and developed an educational system that was recognized as one of the best in the world, in large part because of its close relationship to solving the problems faced by the economy and society. As an example, one could mention engineering education – in a variety of fields. Future engineers, directly involved in solving pressing problems, acquired not only practical skills within their immediate profession, but also mastering the «science of management» and creating something new. In this sense, our country has long had and applies what is now called «E-STEM education» in foreign countries (paper by A. V. Tikhonova and Y. V. Malkova).

Today education is dominated by the focus on the learning process (which is closely connected with the desire for simplicity and «transparency» of administration), namely the transfer of specific skills and abilities, the set of which is expanded by different areas of activity, including, for example, entrepreneurship (paper by O. R. Chepyuk, A. B. Poor, A. I. Gorylev, M. V. Prokhorova, V. S. Kravchenko).

The second circumstance is associated with the presence of a teacher-mentor figure. Mentors are not only and not so much the

bearers of specific practices and professional skills but rather people with their own understanding of the world around them and their accumulated experience in solving non-standard situations. This process, in the author's opinion, should be called «learning» rather than «teaching. The distinction between the former and the latter is determined precisely by the presence of a central figure of a teacher-mentor – whether it is a school, vocational education, or the choice of a scientific career. The process of «teaching» is based primarily on the transmission of values and an understanding of the challenges that students face now and will face in the future.

The Russian education system has many vivid examples when a teacher-mentor not only determined the professional destiny of students, but also gave them the most powerful impetus of creative and creative work for many years to come. One such iconic figure was the outstanding scientist (not only a chemist, but also an economist) D. I. Mendeleev. As B. P. Weinberg<sup>3</sup>, who later noted listening to his lectures, noted: «...there was a crowd of science-seeking students in Mendeleev's auditorium and there was a university professor, in the fullest sense of the word. On occasion, the professor tried to explain to us the purpose of the university, to clarify to us what we should take from the university, what we should give to it and how we would use what we took, coming out of the university lecture halls and laboratories into life.

... Finishing the course, I (*D. I. Mendeleev*) would like to say how, what is the true university spirit, what is its essence, where does this university soul come from, which has a very special connotation for those who belong to the university from the inside.

This spirit consists exclusively and entirely, in essence, only in one thing: *the aspiration to reach the truth at any cost, – not practical benefit, not personal improvement, not any of these political or economic improvements, – all this is on the side, all these are appendages, all this is nothing but attributes, members of the main, one exclusive aspiration, it is to reach the truth at any cost and in any way whatsoever...*

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<sup>3</sup> Weinberg, Boris Petrovich. Wikipedia (wikipedia.org)

*... he warned us against plundering Russia's natural riches, persuaded us to bring the «light of knowledge» into these matters, pointed out that in this is our duty...»<sup>4</sup>.*

A fundamental element in the formation of an approach focused not on ratings and indicators, but on the results of teaching is the teacher-mentor. The qualities needed to produce these teachers can only be developed and sustained through mutual agreement, trust, and a foundation of national and historical values. Much of what has been achieved in past years has been lost, yet much has been preserved. With the interest and mutual understanding of all parties involved in the process, there is a real chance to recreate the national education system at a new quality level.

Editor in chief of 'ECO'



V.A. Kryukov

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<sup>4</sup> *Weinberg B. P.* From memoirs about Dmitri Ivanovich Mendeleev as a lecturer // The net fee from the publication – to the fund of the establishment of the Mendeleev Institute. Tomsk: Printing house of Governor's Office. 1910. 42 p. [P. 6–7].





