

Session summary

THE ST. PETERSBURG INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC FORUM – 2010
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Session title: **NEW MODELS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS**

In cooperation with United Company RUSAL

Problem

The digitalization of all forms of media and changing social fabric of the modern family are entering the classroom at an increasingly earlier age, challenging education leaders and policy makers to design new curricula and modes of interactive learning that will shape the leaders of tomorrow.

Select quotes

“Education is the core for everything. This topic is vital for everyone. We all are parents either in the current or the next generation.” - Tina Kandelaki

“Russia’s resources are not limited to its oil, gas and wood, but also includes its Human Capital.” - Dr. Boris Berenfeld

“True teacher is a person who is still prepared to teach for free.” - Anatoly Kasprzhak

“In a modern world the schools are no longer the only source of knowledge.” - Yefim Rachevsky

“It’s not sufficient to provide equipment, new approaches in teaching of the children are essential.” - Katerina Polivanova

“School of the future is a school with “open architecture”. It is able to establish positive relationships with different educational institutions: museums, libraries, family, work environment of the parents.” - Igor Valdman

Moderator:

Tina Kandelaki, TV presenter

Panelists:

Mark Agranovich, Head of Centre for Monitoring and Statistics in Education, Federal Institute for Educational Development

Dr. Boris Berenfeld, President and CEO, The International Laboratory of Advanced Education Technologies (ILAET)

Anatoly Kasprzhak, Rector, Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences (MSSSES)

Katerina Polivanova, Scientific Director of the Programme “Communication, education, technology”, Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences

Yefim Rachevsky, Principal, Moscow High School “Tsaritsyno”

Pavel Sergomanov, Rector, Krasnoyarsk Region Institute of Further Training

Tuula Väisänen, Director, Finnish-Russian School, Helsinki

Igor Valdman, Director, Center for International Cooperation in Education Development, Academy of National Economy under the Government of the Russian Federation

Synopsis

Panelists noted that the topic of primary and secondary education is vital to everyone, since most people are parents. It was unanimously agreed that the very fact that this topic was included in the Forum's agenda was evidence of its vital significance for society today.

During the discussion, it was agreed that graduates of the future must be able to:

- study
- think critically
- find and analyse information
- apply what they have learned in their own lives
- solve problems on their own
- work in groups

The participants stated that the knowledge currently acquired by Russian students does not fully meet their requirements. The general view was the subjects taught are largely academic in nature, and students do not always know how to apply this knowledge to their lives.

Comments were heard that despite the widespread view that Russian students are overloaded, statistics tell a different story. In comparison with other developed countries, the school year for Russian children is one month shorter, while the overall time spent studying in secondary school is shorter. This means that they enter the job market with less knowledge than necessary, and as a result many Russian graduates do not go on to work in their specialty. According to the data cited, 60% of Russian students with a secondary education aim to continue their education at a university, and only 40% receive a vocational secondary education; in developed countries, 60% of students leaving secondary schools have generally recognized certificates, which enable them to immediately work in their vocation.

According to Dr Berenfeld, since 1960, a new arena has emerged, which has been labelled the "infosphere". A discussion began on the harm or benefits caused by the Internet, in particular by social networks. Various views were expressed, but the predominant opinion was that despite the use of the Internet by students, the ability to relate to other people face-to-face and to gain first-hand knowledge of the world are still important today. Relating to people in a network enables children to choose for themselves who they want to talk to and what they want to discuss, and also to gain information on any subject of interest. School has thus ceased to be their only source of knowledge.

The participants came to the general view that to modernize schools, systematic changes need to be made in the field of secondary education, which cannot happen overnight. The main areas for reform were identified as:

- ensuring appropriate compensation for teachers
- technical re-equipment of the teaching process (interactive whiteboards, computers, electronic calendars)
- increasing teachers' skill levels, in particular their computer literacy
- redesigning the educational system and introducing new teaching methods

All participants agreed that problems have always existed in the educational system and they can never be completely eradicated. This is not just the case for Russian: the issue is being discussed throughout the world.

The role of business in restructuring secondary education received particular attention. Participants called on business to be more open to vocational training and to invest in projects that would develop the infrastructure of knowledge, for example, by creating museums of science and technology that mirror those seen in developed countries. Business representatives in turn said they hope that modern schools will devote more attention to areas of knowledge that match the demand seen on the job market, in particular mathematics and physics.

Keywords: comprehensive school, education at primary and secondary stages, curricula, educational methods, new educational technologies, models of interactive learning, digital technologies, modes of interactive learning, social fabric of the modern family

Recommended reading for: Ministry of Education and Science of the RF, governmental officials, politicians, education specialists, business representatives specializing in the sphere of innovations, digital technologies and interactive educational software

Disclosures

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