EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT VIA CREATING AND INTRODUCING MODERN TOOLS OF INTERACTIVE TEACHING

Natalia Georgieva and Marina Shakina

Perm Campus National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia

The problem of improving quality of higher education arose long ago. Many higher education institutions have been working at this issue since last century, developing innovative ways to improve quality of education. Since today’s approaches and spheres of assessment are different, the solution to the problem is rather complicated. After Russia’s joining the Bologna process, quality of higher education became rather a pointed question. Participation in the process does not imply obligatory standardization of higher education, but it shows intention to compare higher education in different countries. Comparability of educational systems is based both on actions linked to changes of higher education structure (introduction of two-level education, credit system, etc.) and measures defining education quality (quality control, using new education standards, introducing innovative methods of students’ preparation and Learning Management System). This article considers the way to improve higher education quality via innovative teaching methods. Besides, the article introduces an overview of active and interactive teaching methods, integrative teaching approaches, examples of their implementation when teaching business subjects, and some statistics of using the methods described.

Keywords: Education quality, innovative teaching methods, interactive teaching methods, case study, videocases.

1. HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY

The term of “education quality” is widely used in modern education. However, its essence and meanings have not been fully identified so far, despite a large amount of research in this area. According to Webster’s Dictionary, “Quality is a condition of being of such and such a sort as distinguished from others; nature or character relatively considered, as of goods; character; sort; rank”. [Webster,1913]

Quality is connected with the object itself, as the object cannot lose its quality, staying as it is. Thus, quality is a complex philosophic, economic and social category that could be cleared up through numerous definitions. It means that the problem of quality is rather complicated to understand and solve.

Quality is usually defined as correspondence to certain criteria, norms, and requirements. We should emphasize, however, that the term “quality” has numerous definitions. On the one hand, quality should meet the requirements of the environment and consumers. On the other hand, in a
dynamically developing society quality must exceed the demands made by the environment towards an object. Otherwise, it is impossible to create conditions to do social forecasts and make progress. “It means that quality must be evolutionarily excessive; there should be enough of it and even more that required “here and now”. Quality must anticipate the development rate of both internal potential quality of the object and the social environment. (Ilinskiy)

It is far more difficult to define quality of education. Many organizations deal with quality of education issues. For example, in Europe there is a special committee assessing education quality, and numerous conferences devoted to this problem are held. In Russia six symposiums on qualimetry have been organized. (New quality of higher education in modern Russia. Conceptual programming approach.)

Currently one of the trends of modernizing education system in Russia is improvement of control and education quality management.

The government of the Russian Federation has approved the Priority orientations of education system development according to which it is essential to form a nationwide system of assessing education and educational programs (Bolotov V. A.).

Despite this fact the quality of Russia’s education decreases rather than improves. (I.M.Ilinskiy).

Numerous meetings at Russia’s Ministry of Education are mainly devoted to the quality issue which concerns rectors of some large commercial higher educational institutions (HEI).

Intuitively, the term “education quality” is quite understandable by people, but they intuitively admit that “quality” is a complicated notion comprising a number of components.

According to the survey held in 100 Russian communities, respondents often believe that “high-quality education” is education that allows a person to be a professional in their field (31% of the respondents). 15% of the respondents think that high-quality education is a faithful attitude to education which is incompatible with bribery.

Approximately 9% of the respondents emphasize being in demand on the labour market. According to 8% of the respondents, high-quality education implies maximum practical application of knowledge and allows a young specialist to get involved into the work activity as quickly as possible. About 7% of the respondents highlight smart teaching personnel, possessing advanced educational technologies. 4% of the respondents believe that high-quality education is incompatible with commercial forms of education, while 3% suppose that excellent education should meet the world’s standards of specialist training and 3% of the respondents associate it with culture, intellect and morality.

It is essential to mention that 40% of the respondents think that at present the quality of education does not correspond to the world standards and 53% of the respondents claim that in Russia there are very few HEIs that provide high quality education. The people surveyed are likely to speak about high quality education by Russian standards rather than the world’s requirements. (I. Shmerlina)

Let us consider the term “quality”, which is used in instructional research. Russian and foreign authors use it as multidimensional. (Systems of providing quality of higher education: experience, problems, and prospects)

V.V. Ulezko states that education quality is a complex factor comprising interaction of administration and higher-education teaching personnel and students. The levels of administration and teaching personnel have been properly developed, while students remain rather a passive object of modernization. (V.V. Ulezko)

When defining the term “quality” it is essential to pay attention to what is assessed and who assesses it. Besides, it is necessary to consider the criteria and indicators, the possible prospects
and the main objective. Thus, studying the education process quality, P. Jacobsson emphasizes such directions as quality of graduates, quality of the educational process, quality of examinations, and quality and level of education financing.

According to I.M. Ilinskiy, quality is the core of the educational process. (Ilinskiy)

In addition, the problem of specialist training in modern HEI refers to sharpening competition both in the for-profit educational industry and public education. As mentioned above, quality of education must exceed the claims of economy, politics and other forces of social progress.

Foreign researchers distinguish the three main approaches: objectivistic, relativistic and development concept.

The objectivistic approach implies that the results of quality assessment of different courses and HEI can objectively be measured and compared. Besides, the assessment process leads to creating the database which could be used for the contrastive analysis regarding other HEI. This approach analyses the “input” and “output” quality results of the education system. The “input” quality results are: proficiency of the teaching staff, proper equipment of the institute (including computers and library), and the level of the institute applicants’ expertise. The “output” quality results are: the students’ rating, an opportunity to get further education, and job placement. Within this approach it is obvious that some of the results coincide with the intuitive comprehension of the term “education quality”.

Relativistic approach is based on assessing “how the objective is matched”, as there are no absolute criteria of assessing any actions.

Development concept is primarily directed to the internal assessment of the higher education establishment activity (the teaching staff and students). This approach, however, does not exclude the external assessment of quality. Besides, development concept concentrates on improvement of the educational process quality at the current moment while the objectivistic and relativistic approaches only assess the previous experience of the HEI. The measurements based on the objectivistic and relativistic approaches assess the quality of the HEI as a whole or the management policy of the institute.

Other approaches (Brennan, Williams, Harris, McNamara, 1997) assume that assessing the quality of the educational environment is a collective and multifactor process which not only assesses the quality but controls compliance with the standards and observes changes and innovations. The assessment process should be based on real facts which refer to the work of the certain HEIs.

Thus, education quality is the system category. Quality of a HEI could be considered from the point of view of the following components:

- quality of teaching staff;
- quality of teaching programs and aids;
- quality of applicants and students;
- quality of infrastructure;
- quality of moral and psychic atmosphere;
- quality of relations with the external social environment;
- quality of managing the HEI as a whole and its departments.
All the above mentioned components comprise education quality which is the result of the educational process effective management and quality of the education policy (Ilinskiy)

2. QUALITY OF RUSSIAN EDUCATION IN VIEW OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

Russia’ joining the Bologna process in 2003 raised new education problems, particularly issues on quality. The Bologna declaration is not a reform imposed upon national governments or higher education institutions. The Bologna process aims at creating convergence and, thus, is not a path towards the “standardisation” or “uniformisation” of European higher education. Convergence in education systems is based on both actions connected with changes in higher education structure (introducing two-level education and credit system) and actions evaluating education quality (using quality control, new education standards, introducing innovative methods of preparing students, introducing LMS) (F. Golovin, 2010). Achieving the given objectives is supposed to lead to comparability and harmonization of the national higher education systems in European countries (http://www.bologna.spbu.ru/question1.php).

Considering the Bologna process, we should emphasize the key regulations of the Bologna declaration. The 5th and 6th clauses are the most significant within the scope of the problem in question:

✓ Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies;
✓ Promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education, particularly with regards to curricular development, inter-institutional co-operation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research. (Bologna convention)

As for the 5th clause, quoted above, the structure of the objective itself has significantly improved. There are three clearly defined levels of the quality control system: higher education institutions, countries, and Europe as a whole. Moreover, HEIs have most responsibility for quality control. National quality control systems must include:

- Defining responsibilities of the participating establishments
- Internal and external assessing the curricula with participation of students and issuing the results
- System of accreditation and certification
- International cooperation and creating a network of agencies specialized in defining quality of higher education

The European standard is responsible for selecting compatible standards, procedures and guidelines so as to provide quality and analyze ways of adequate quality control. Russia is quite experienced in solving problems concerning assessment of education quality in HEIs and educational programs. But this experience seems to be out-of-date. Modern education assumes that students must be really and virtually mobile, which, in its turn, requires creating quality control methods used to assess intermediate and final quality of students’ expertise. If such methods have not been developed, too much responsibility falls on HEIs as
they have to decide themselves whether the subjects taught in a different HEI should be awarded or not. To assess education quality it is important to define common competencies for different subjects. (Press release from the Conference of Ministers, responsible for higher education, Berlin, 2003) So the first level of education has the following competencies:

✓ Ability to demonstrate basics of the subject history  
✓ Ability to logically present the knowledge acquired  
✓ Ability to contextualize new information and interpret it  
✓ Ability to demonstrate understanding the general structure of the subject and relations between sub-subjects  
✓ Ability to understand and use critical analysis methods and theories development  
✓ Ability to properly use methods and techniques of the subject  
✓ Ability to assess quality of the research in the certain subject field  
✓ Ability to understand the results of the experimental verification of scientific theories

The following competencies should be developed for the graduates of the second level:

✓ To have advanced knowledge of the subject field, i.e. to possess the newest research methods and techniques, to know and interpret the latest theories  
✓ To monitor and interpret theory and practice development  
✓ To use independent research methods and be able to explain its results on an advanced level  
✓ To be able to contribute to the subject according to the standards in the subject field, for example, within the qualifying work  
✓ To use an original and creative approach  
✓ To become competent on a professional level

Currently, the Bologna process has taken a strong position in the process of political and expert discussion of the educational policy. As a result, to make the European education standards integrate, necessary alterations are introduced in the national legal system; experts meet regularly; national reports are made every two years; training quality is monitored; students are involved. In general there is a positive internal system effect.

One of the integral parts of the Bologna process is using mechanisms and instruments that provide high quality of education. In this regard, we could also emphasize high efficiency of using innovative technologies and interactive methods of education in the process of improving education quality. The primary objective of the HEIs is to create conditions favorable for development and implementation of such mechanisms. It should be underlined that the most high-demand HEIs of the country are actively working out and using the development strategies.

3. INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN BUSINESS EDUCATION

One of the most important requirements and characteristics of high quality business education is to eliminate the gap between the demands to managers on the part of business and the existing
level of academic background of economic HEIs graduates. Despite the increasing number of commercial and state-backed HEIs providing management training, the country is suffering shortage of qualified managers. According to the global competitive performance rating, Russia takes the 53rd place among 117 countries. The weaknesses of competitiveness in higher education are exactly connected with quality of management training. That is why a question of introducing technological innovations is particularly pointed among Russian HEIs. (V. Shoptenko, 2009)

In spite of this fact, many Russian HEIs place a priority on theory in teaching business subjects. This approach is explained by the two factors:

1) HEIs are inadequately equipped (equipment and software)
2) Teaching staff, using interactive teaching methods, are not sufficiently motivated.

Preparation of lessons with the use of interactive methods is rather more time-consuming for the teacher. Besides, when conducting a lesson a teacher consumes extra energy acting as an active participant, a moderator, a consultant and an expert.

Nevertheless, one of the most important objectives of the modern higher education is not only knowledge formation but an ability to put the gained knowledge into practice. (Application of interactive and innovative teaching methods in law and economic disciplines, T.D. Zasorina). It is practically impossible using only traditional methods of teaching. If traditional and interactive methods are used in a good balance, students get an opportunity to acquire the most important professional skills: to analyze the situation, to search necessary information, to identify cause-effect relations, and to forecast future periods.

The foundation of innovation technologies was proposed by John Dewey at the beginning of 20th century. He claimed that the traditional educational system should be gradually replaced by «learning by doing» system which allows a person to get new knowledge from their experience. This idea generated the two concepts:

1) The learning pyramid
2) Dale’s cone of experience

Based on the cone of experience we can define the educational results which are possible to get with the help of certain educational media:

The “learning pyramid” theory shows the dependence between teaching methods and material retention degree.
The pyramid clearly demonstrates that a traditional lecture (a teacher’s monologue without any illustrations) is the least effective teaching method providing on average 5% of knowledge retention. At the same time “active teaching (students’ participation in different activities) leads to better results (Fig.2).
Let us consider the modern innovative methods to involve students into the process:

1. Role Play (simulations)

Students are given an opportunity to put the theory they learned into practice. Role play allows making a group decision in conditions imitating the real situation. Students are able to learn the professional procedures and tools as well as get an idea of the whole structure of the certain activity (V. Shoptenko, D. Konanchuk. D. Kaisin 2009; Y. Vrubel 2010; T. Zasorina, M. Belova, N. Skudnova 2010).

2. Project as one of the most effective teaching methods

The idea of the project approach is that the student is involved into team work, aimed at solving a practical problem. The student is able to master the method to do such work when developing a project, analyzing the data, forecasting the development of the situation. Group work in organizing a teaching process makes the participants work in a team. A teaching process based on a project approach is most effective when training managers who have to establish the process of business reformation and development.

3. Case Study

It is primarily effective for managers to form such key professional competences as interpersonal skills and leadership, and an ability to analyze a large amount of non-sequenced information within a short period of time. Case study helps to make a decision under stress and without sufficient information. Case study is used as a crucially new addition to the lecture method which is a fundamental teaching element in the classic university education system.

To sum up, let us define the key elements of innovation education technology:

1. Modern content.

It implies development of competencies which are adequate in the modern business. The content should be well-structured and presented in the multimedia form by means of modern means of communication.

2. Modern teaching methods.

They are active methods of forming competencies, based on interaction of participants, involved into the educational process, rather than passive learning of material.

3. Modern teaching infrastructure (techniques).

It includes informational, technological, organizational and communicational components that allow effective using the advantages of the information educational environment.
Very often innovation technologies are perceived as more frequent use of information and communication technologies such as internet, multimedia and teleconferences rather than using new educational methods. Such a narrow view of innovations gives no opportunity to improve education quality.

4. SPECIFIC FEATURES OF CASE STUDY METHOD

Let us consider in detail the Case study method. The key feature of the Case study method is the fact that students investigate past situations from the business practice. The emphasis is put on students’ independent work when reviewing and analyzing a great amount of practical material. (A. Zobov, 2006).

According to one of the definitions, the Case study is a method when students and instructors are involved into discussions of real problems and cases.

Traditionally, cases are prepared in writing as reflection of urgent business problems. The cases are studied by students and then discussed individually, which is followed by a joint discussion under the instructor’s guidance. The Case study method comprises specially prepared training materials and techniques. In this particular instance, the Case study is considered as a process that involves “discussions” and “dispute”. The Case study is based on the principle: “The way to the truth is more important than the truth itself”.

Thus, the Case study assumes:

- a case in writing from business practice;
- students’ individual studying and analyzing the case;
- a joint discussion under the instructor’s guidance;
- following the principle: “The way to the truth is more important than the truth itself”.

A particular case has a number of fundamental characteristics:

First, the case is specially prepared (it is written, edited, constructed) for the purpose of studying. Methodical processing of particular cases, used for discussions, must create creative and well-directed atmosphere the process of discussion. (A. Dolgorukov)

Second, the case must coincide with the conceptual domain of the subject in the frame of which it is considered. The case is educational as it teaches and forms professional skills in the context of a certain scientific and methodical view of the world. If these requirements are not met, it is impossible to have a purposeful influence on students and form necessary professional skills. As a result, students will only be able to subjectively acquire information.

Third, studying different cases students are able to learn how to analyze information, trace cause and effect relations, identify the key problems and trends in business processes. To possess up-to-date information is necessary but insufficient for an educational situation.

We consider an ideal case as:

1. an amusing story of a situation that happened in a certain business;
5. VIDEOCASES AS AN INTERACTIVE TEACHING METHOD

Practical focus of business education is the foundation of its effectiveness. Some teachers use simulation exercises in order to reconstruct a real situation, others apply to the Case study method. As mentioned above, this method is based on analysis of the situation from real life. The Case is not just a description of the events, but an information complex that allows students to understand and analyze the situation. The Case generates information for discussions as it is a model of a real problem that students could face in future.

One of the forms of Case study is a Videocase. The business situation is described in a movie, which could be a fiction film (with professional actors and a ready-made scenario) and documentary (with the company’s representatives). A Videocase usually consists of a movie and a toolkit for a business instructor. We consider a Videocase as an interactive method. Interactive methods are techniques, aimed at students’ active participation in the educational process. Videocases are “events” from business practice represented in a movie. They allow illustrating several aspects of a real business life all at once.

Unlike foreign prototypes, cases developed in Russia have “Russian peculiarities” such as special emotionality, clarity and instant recognition. As the proverb says, “a picture paints a thousand words”. Videocases not only show but help take apart the cause - effect relations of the arising problems and mistakes that have been made. The problem described in the case might be both typical and specific, which creates extra opportunities to make decisions in an unknown situation. In many Russia’s HEIs videocases are a new teaching tool that helps to achieve one of the most essential objectives: to improve quality of education through creating and implementing modern interactive teaching tools. Very often ready-made videocases are developed on the basis of examples of large foreign corporations. It is not a disadvantage but they do not reflect Russian reality and do not allow using them for productive analysis and making adequate decisions. Thus, there is a motivated necessity to develop videocases describing local, regional and national business situations.

An educational videocase comprises:
✓ Ready-made educational technology;
✓ Cases based on real facts;
✓ Humorous background of real business situations;
✓ Russian specific character for Russian consumers and manufacturers;
✓ Optimistic view of the problem solving.

An educational videocase is not just a movie. It consists of several complementary elements that will make the educational process easier and more effective. A videocase involves:

✓ Educational videocase: makes the participants more involved into the process and the material better memorized, encourages students to implement the acquired knowledge into practice. Being the basis for analysis, it initiates discussions and interchange of experience.
Textbook of methodologies: recommends how to better organize work with the videocase, offers the author’s view on the situation, contains questions for discussion and additional tasks on the topic considered.

Handout materials: contain additional information, questions and tasks.

Two variants of ready-made decisions (true and false): provide students with an opportunity to analyze the situation, considering the ready-made decision, explaining the mistakes and giving their own solutions.

Information base (websites and periodicals): where additional information about the company and the problem could be found.

One of the most important advantages of videocases is the fact that they allow teachers to:

- put the participants into the real situation which is typical for their current or future professional activity;
- increase effectiveness of the acquired information through the use of active teaching methods and the problem visualization;
- easily adapt practical situations to the existing educational programs due to specificity and brevity of the videocase;
- form skills in the right in the classroom;
- make decisions based on theory as a videocase involves multiple replies to the given questions;
- shift the emphasis from acquiring knowledge to forming skills;
- organize interactive search, collection and analysis of additional information on the current issue.

6. CASE DEVELOPMENT METHODS

We have been developing and introducing videocases to the course of “Developing and Making Managerial Decisions” for several years. The process is rather time-consuming and it requires much creative and methodical effort. The work has been complicated by the fact that there are very few ready-made videocases, based on Russian business materials and adapted to this very course. Thus, videocases for each topic of the course have been developed. The first problem encountered was where to get factual material which could be processed and used at lessons. Here could be the following options:

First, we took as a basis the fragment of the company’s functioning and developing / bankruptcy. The internal information was gathered as part of the study. The major problem referred to gathering information on the financial system as such information is treated as confidential. In certain cases it is only possible to gain access to financial information through connections with the company management and people involved into the project.

Second, we used quite often secondary sources of information such as Internet, TV, newspapers and advertising brochures. This method is effective as it is possible to encourage students to find independently the missing information for the analysis. It makes the discussion more intriguing and leads to effective competition among students.

Third, some videocases are imaginary situations as animated cartoons and film clips are used. Such cases have certain disadvantages since they are far from being real business situations, but we tried to keep them attractive and intriguing.
We had very unexpected sources of ideas for videocases. For example, we had a summer holiday in Sol’ Iletsk, a town in South Ural, which is a unique natural complex with salty healing lakes. The water composition in the lakes is similar to the Dead Sea in Israel. However, the resort conditions were uncomfortable and the infrastructure was underdeveloped, so, the negative emotions outweighed the curative effect. The “rest” had such a negative impact that we decided to develop an educational videocase on the problem. We used personal photographs, video, procuracy reports, newspaper articles, management’s and holiday-makers’ interviews, materials about organizing a similar health resort treatment and rest in Israel. Taking into account the fact that Sol’ Iletsk resort was visited by many citizens of our city, region, and country as well as students of our university, the problem concerned in the videocase is quite urgent and it is worth paying attention to. The case is provided with tasks of different degree of complexity like analysis of the situation, diagnosis of the problem, identifying the key problem, analysis of the management decisions on the municipal and regional level, developing various solutions to the problem, and developing a project on the areawide planning, and working out a business plan. (appendices 1, 2)

7. RESULTS OF VIDEOCASE IMPLEMENTATION INTO THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

When implementing videocases into the educational process we selected students of full-time, part-time and evening tuition. During the “Developing and Making Managerial Decisions” course we actively used videocases in three groups, and only in one group lessons were held in a traditional way: lectures, seminars, oral and writing tasks, tests. To monitor the implementation results we developed a feedback survey. Besides, we made a regular comparison of the control groups’ and the traditional group’s results.

The survey contains the following questions:

1. Which form of presenting material is the most suitable for you?
2. The material presented in which form do you memorize better?
3. Do videocases facilitate or complicate you work?
4. Which advantages and disadvantages of this teaching form could you mention?

About 80% of the respondents underline that videocases make the educational process more interesting, emotional and creative.

60% of the respondents emphasize that the tasks to the videocase seemed to be more difficult than to the oral and writing tests. In their opinion, it is more time-consuming as it involves searching additional information, analyzing the situation, and making decisions. Nevertheless, they admit that the emotional impact of the video combined with the information complex gives an opportunity to comprehend and feel the situation more deeply. It, in its turn, leads to better decisions.

56% of the respondents marked that discussing the project in groups and criticisms of the proposed solutions form a more responsible attitude when preparing a presentation and answers to the expected questions. Almost all the respondents mention that they have an opportunity to work on the case at any time as it is posted to the website.
So, implementation of videocases into the educational process has led to the following results:

First, students became more interested in the subject and there was a sharp decrease in absenteeism while in the traditional group there was a well-intentioned but passive attitude to the course.

Second, we observed development of students’ creative abilities. For example, at the university there is a ‘rating’ system under which students have to do control tasks. They are allowed to choose various forms of knowledge monitoring such as a test, a problem solving, an oral exam, doing a project and other types of control. Doing a project is a creative task but it requires more time and effort which makes it more complicated. However, students prefer a more challenging but interesting task.

Third, students got interested in research and evaluation which makes their own research work more mature and they often get laureate diplomas at contests of different levels.

Forth, to do an effective practical training, students should possess the following skills and abilities:

✓ case analysis skills
✓ problem diagnosis ability
✓ ability to identify cause-and-effect relations
✓ ability to forecast the future situation
✓ ability to develop alternative solutions to the problem

The most important factor is that students, equipped with the skills and abilities mentioned above, are able to use their expertise during their field experience. In most cases they are offered a job in the company where they did practical training. As a consequence, our graduates have an opportunity of a multi-option choice in different companies. We assume that this is the most eloquent evidence of education effectiveness and high quality management training.

Thus, videocases based on Russian companies’ experience have certain advantages. The students studying the videocase are able to:

✓ observe the course of events;
✓ analyze the events;
✓ use web sites, mass media and press;
✓ carry out research in the real-time mode, making experiments in different directions.

Students, participating in such experiments, acquire skills of gathering information, joining issues, developing alternative solutions to the problem, evaluating them and choosing the best option. This results in improving quality of expertise and skills and makes them more competitive on the labour market.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Webster, Dictionary on Philisophy, 1913.

V.A. Bolotov Head of the Federal Service of Russia for Supervision in the Sphere of Education and Science, about creating the Russia wide system of assessing education quality.

I. Shmerlina, Quality of higher education in Russia. http://www.fom.ru/

Systems of providing quality of higher education: experience, problems, and prospects http://pssw.vspu.ru/

V.V. Ulezko, About the most important components of education quality: invitation to discussion. http://www.fom.ru/


T.D. Zasorina Application of interactive and innovative teaching methods in law and economic disciplines.


A. Dolgorukov The case-study method as a modern technology professionally-oriented education.


L.I. Korneeva Modern teaching methods in the system of managerial staff development in Germany: foreign experience.

A.V. Korovko, Ya.S. Bykhovsky, M.M. Yudkevich, S.G. Bilevsky. Development concept of information educational environment to support the general educational at the Higher School of Economics.


Po Dai Rao, L. Rybina , Metamorphoses of business education of the ex-soviet republic.

M.A. Molodchick, Integration method development and implementation into the educational process at lessons.


N.M. Kuznetsova Application of the problematic teaching method in Economics subjects.


All about business games http://www.ubo.ru/articals.
Sol’-Iletsk is a resort town, which is located in the southern part of Orenburg region, about 70 km. from Orenburg, near the border with Kazakhstan. The first part of the name of Sol’-Iletsk represents that the main natural wealth of that area is salt, the second part of the name points to the river nearby called Iletsk (left tributary of the Ural) [3].

Few centuries ago there were salt deposits instead of Sol’-Iletsk city. The city was founded in 1754, on the spot of salt deposits. Also, JSC “Iletsksol” was founded on the basis of salt deposits. JSC “Iletsksol” is one of the Russian enterprises; it extracts rock, table, and common salt of high quality only; this salt is used in over 80 regions of Russia and CIS countries [7].

The permanent population of Sol’-Iletsk is about 26,4 thousand people, but in the summertime people from all over the country visit Sol’-Iletsk on their vacation, and the population raises to about 150-160 thousand people [5]. What is the secret of such a great popularity, you will ask.

There is no secret, in fact. The deal is that the intensive development of salt-extracting processes and the number of salt mines in this region have led to unique in its composition and properties lakes, which are, in fact, wasted salt mines gradually filled with water and turned into natural healing complex of mineral lakes, filled with salt and mud.

In addition, a moderately continental climate of Sol’-Iletsk increases the duration of the vacation period for tourists to more than 120 days, and the bathing season lasts about 70 days.


The most popular is the saline Razval. The saline Razval is a disused salt mine about 7000 sq. m. big, the largest width of 300 m. and a depth of about 20 m.
The salinity of the Razval is 316.4 ppm, which is equivalent to the salinity of the Dead Sea water [4]. That is why many experts state that water from Sol’-Iletsk, in terms of its medicinal properties, is similar to one in famous Israeli resorts.

The water of the saline Razval is recommended for balneological procedures. Such procedures are good for patients with skin diseases, diseases of osteomuscular system. Another valuable feature of the saline Razval is its ability to cleanse itself in 10-12 hours [1].

In contrast to the saline Razval, the Tuzluchnoye lake is filled with medical mud. Besides, salt in its composition includes sulfurous iron, salicylic acid and the smallest clay particles. The lake area is about 23750 sq.m., the depth of about 2.5 m., the thickness of a mud layer is 2 m. The mud from Tuzluchnoye possesses set of medical properties: it activates energy processes in organism; mud has expressed antioxidant properties and possesses antispasmodic, immunomodulatory, recycling and rejuvenating action.

Also, the mud from Tuzluchnoye promotes hem's resolution, improvement of joints function, treatment of female diseases, and normalization of sexual system function.

Moreover, it improves venous blood outflow and blood circulation on the whole, and renders massage effect [1].
Another mud lake Dunino occupies the space of 88550 sq. m. and has depth of 13 m. It has unique sodium-chloride-brome structure of water, and its mud has several medical properties. The mud well influences on nervous system and has calming therapeutic effect, it improves protective functions of the organism and possesses massage effect. It is useful for people with hypererethism, patients with diseases of a gastro enteric path and with initial stage of a hypertension [10]. Similar properties appear in the water of the Joy mud lake.

Except the above mentioned lakes, there are some more lakes in Sol’-Iletsk’s territory. The saline New is a drowned disused salt mine, concentration of salt is about 269-288 ppm. The Big and the Small City lakes are mineral with rather low concentration of salt. Each of them occupies the space of about 21000 sq.m., and its depth is about 15 m. These lakes the favorite place for resting, because they are used for bathing, including after stay in salty lakes. The water structure of the Big City lake is similar to water of Caspian sea; and the Small City’s water is comparable to Issyk-Kul’s water on cleanliness [1].

Taking into account the unique characteristics of the Sol’-Iletsk territory, building a health-improving complex became quite natural. First, the local enterprise JSC "Iletsksalt” has constructed a balneary with ten mud couches and ten baths nearby the lakes. Then, Sol’-Iletsk’s regional physiotherapeutic hospital [8] with 3 buildings on 210 places was founded near the balneary. More than 1200 various physiotherapeutic procedures are carried out by the experts of the hospital every day; about 500 visitors per day accept these procedures. Subsequently, balneary and physiotherapeutic hospital have been united under LLC "Sol’-Iletsk-resort" [9].

Nowadays Sol’-Iletsk offers the following services:
- saline and sodium chloride baths;
- mud application;
- physiotherapy;
- massage;
- speleotherapy (disused salt mine with ionized air (3000 - 3500 ions in cc.));

When patients are not busy with their procedures, they spend spare time sunbathing and swimming in the saline and mud lakes. Also, patients can visit numerous bars and cafes, which are located nearby the lakes, and take an advantage of entertainment facilities.

Among the numerous vacationers there are also a lot of local residents and tourists who live outside the resort zone. As for those who live outside the resort zone, they usually stay in hotels.
or rent private accommodation or tent in campgrounds. The cost of accommodation is now about 600-1800 rubles per night for single room, but in a rush season it is rather problematic to find a place in a hotel. Usually, the rooms should be booked several weeks in advance [6].

Besides that, tourists can rent a private accommodation for about 100-200 rubles per person per night.

But the savings on the cost of living is the only advantage of this alternative, because the visitors always face the following difficulties: lack of hot water and other basic amenities, and number of obstacles during their way from home to beach

In addition, tourists have the opportunity to stay in the campgrounds. It costs 300 rubles per person per night. But in this case they are also faced limited amenities, which is quite significant during the summer heat [6].

Besides problems with accommodation and living conditions, the city is quite unprepared for an influx of visitors. You can find numerous complaints about problems with transport and lack of decent places for cultural activities on the forums of Sol’-Iletsk [11].

The lakes and the territory around them, which are the main purpose of visiting the resort, are unaccommodated. In rush time, the beaches are usually crowded; the average amount of visitors per day can come up to 10 thousand.

A standard set of so-called beach conveniences is poorly represented in the recreation area. Showers with no hot water require payment and their number is limited, which results in constant queues. Recreation areas are also not provided by toilets.

In addition, there are no information booths to keep the visitors abreast about the healing properties of water bodies and precautions when using them. Ignorance and the failure of these precautions might have negative consequences for the health of swimmers. Another source of threats to health security is the lack of leisure opportunities for rapid professional medical care.

One of the most frequent reasons for tourists’ complaints is violations of sanitary conditions in the recreation area. The clean-up and removal of household waste are not timely, the conditions in location catering hardly meet any basic Sanitary-Epidemiological standards. All these violations are not eliminated by the resort administration, despite numerous complaints on these issues.

One more deficiency is, that it does not allow the Sol’-Iletsk to become a resort of decent standard, are lack of security on the beaches, as well as lack of any conditions for people with disabilities.
All these significant shortcomings of the Sol’-Iletsk resort pale in comparison with the illegal collection of fees for visiting lakes and beaches, that has become the reason for most ardent discontent of travelers. It happened that tourists and locals were forced to pay up to 100 rubles for visiting the beach and swimming in the lakes [2]. The question of the legality of such actions has attracted an increased attention not only of tourists and the society, but also of the Administration of Sol’-Iletsk area. As a result, many claims and lawsuits were charged to “Sol’-Iletsk resort” LLC (Limited Liability Company), as a direct tenant of the resort territory [12].

 Territory leased by LLC “Sol’-Iletsk-resort”, refers to municipal property of the Sol’-Iletsk area. Throughout the lease “Sol’-Iletsk resort” LLC was repeatedly brought to administrative responsibility for violations of environmental, sanitary and other regulations. In 2010, the term of the contract has expired, and “Sol’-Iletsk resort” did not extend their time. On this occasion Administration of Sol’-Iletsk area appealed to the Arbitration Court of Orenburg region with a claim to the “Sol’-Iletsk resort” LLC. During the court proceedings “Sol’-Iletsk resort” LLC extended the lease. While the court examination “Sol’-Iletsk resort” LLC exercised illegitimate actions by charging a fee for entry to the lake’s territory. The Arbitration Court of Orenburg region at the suit of the Administration of Sol’-Iletsk area tried to stop the illegal actions. By-turn, “Sol’-Iletsk resort” LLC made a sublease contract with farm entrepreneur A. Degtyarev. Thereby, “Sol’-Iletsk resort” LLC avoided liability, because the court decision didn’t extend over the sublease. The Administration of Sol’-Iletsk area appealed to Arbitration Court with new suit to recognize a sublease contract illegal. However, the trial was won by “Sol’-Iletsk resort” LLC due to insufficient evidence presented by the prosecution 12].

Thus, the question of the use and disposal of the lake’s territory remains unresolved.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY TO CASE “SOL’-ILETSK”**


Википедия, Соль-Илецк [Электр. ресурс]. – Режим доступа: http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%A1%D0%BE%D0%BB%D1%8C-%D0%98%D0%BB%D0%B5%D1%86%D0%BA
Википедия, Мертвое море [Элект. ресурс]. – Режим доступа: http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%9C%D1%91%D1%80%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%B5_%D0%BC%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B5


http://kad.arbitr.ru/?id=5d902508-db14-4fe7-b68d-8b82a5e97085 - Отказать в иске

http://kad.arbitr.ru/?id=855e68f9-1eb4-4fbb-8522-4f51e4072026 - Прекратить производство по делу (ст.150, 151 АПК)

http://kad.arbitr.ru/?id=dcaaddfb-2e73-43da-b7dd-fd3211d17de3 - Прекратить производство по делу, Утвердить мировое соглашение (ст.49, 141, 150, 151 АПК)

http://kad.arbitr.ru/?id=24db7206-8e73-496e-8d56-deed7f5dea50 - Отказать в иске

http://kad.arbitr.ru/?id=a4de38a4-973f-420d-9d01-058bc36ca4a2 - Отказать в иске

http://kad.arbitr.ru/?id=e989a2b6-5ba2-4430-b7af-ec4d70074970 - Признать незаконным решение административного органа о привлечении к административной ответственности полностью или в части (ч.2 ст.211 АПК РФ)

http://kad.arbitr.ru/?id=47dce2f3-695f-4ee8-8346-0b6763cb547b - Признать незаконным решение административного органа о привлечении к административной ответственности полностью или в части (ч.2 ст.211 АПК РФ)

http://kad.arbitr.ru/?id=cbdb9c7f-aee5-41ef-bfd6-891dec8f9fde - Оставить без изменения решение, а апелляционную жалобу - без удовлетворения (п.1 ст.269 АПК)

http://kad.arbitr.ru/?id=20e2781f-6827-4a2f-95cb-35d6ab0e6e31 - Возратить заявление (исковое заявление) (ст.129, ч.2 ст.115 АПК)

http://kad.arbitr.ru/?id=cbbaee9d7-d95c-46fe-b7e3-a222d233277c - Удовлетворить иск полностью или частично

http://kad.arbitr.ru/?id=11f6bf51-dcb1-45bb-bf56-a6ca4b154bf7 - Оставить без изменения решение, а апелляционную жалобу - без удовлетворения (п.1 ст.269 АПК)

Возвратить апелляционную жалобу (ст.264 АПК)

Постановление (определение) суда кассационной инстанции

http://kad.arbitr.ru/?id=be00a695-69e2-4b78-bf49-30cf0dbd6ed0 - Прекратить производство по делу, Принять отказ от иска (ст.49, 150, 151 АПК)

http://www.consultant.ru/online/base/?req=doc;base=LAW;n=95782 - Федеральный закон "О природных лечебных ресурсах, лечебно-оздоровительных местностях и курортах"

http://www.consultant.ru/popular/gkrf1/5_25.html - ГК РФ


http://www.consultant.ru/popular/okrsred/70_7.html - Федеральный закон "Об охране окружающей среды"
APPENDICES 2 TASK TO CASE “SOL’-ILETSK”

1. Describe and analyze a problem situation using the data presented in a case, and the additional information;
2. Emphasize key issues and underlying causes of its occurrence;
3. Suggest a solution to this problem.
4. NOTE: Performing the task it is necessary to apply basic knowledge of microeconomic approach to the public goods institute and to use the practical management skills.