

Daria Glazatova: Are you happy about the quality and standards of study programs and awards that your university offers and the quality of teaching provided?

Problems, which at first sight might seem minor, have an unpleasant ability to develop into major ones. Once we start paying attention to the roots of the problem, the bigger picture improves.

I am going to start with the problem of bribing in modern Ukrainian education. While this issue regrettably intrudes in many spheres of life, bribes in education are the starting point in spreading corruption. Bribery exists in our society, and however shameful it is, one alone cannot do anything about it. Bribes are unacceptable in a civilized society. While bribe-industry if I may call it so, thrives and prospers, we cannot talk about the free opportunities and free choices, it automatically puts individuals in unequal positions. Bribing in education is an obstacle which deprives students of the opportunity to succeed. This is not a secret, and interestingly enough everybody is aware of this problem, but unfortunately nothing is being done. Perhaps, thinking that paying bribes is not as serious a crime as, for instance, bribing a judge in court, many people just ignore this issue, thinking it to be an easy way to solve a problem or avoid difficulties, but isn't 'buying' university diploma, for instance, already a crime? Can it be considered a crime against the society, and people that this person will work for? There is no doubt about it.

Bribing shows that talent in its pure form is simply ignored and has no value and money easily but unfairly substitutes knowledge, that consequently suggests, that wealth becomes the major condition of success. Definitely, nowadays people know the price of everything and value of nothing, as Oscar Wilde once said about cynics. There is no hope for such a society.

The psychological pressure in education is another problem. Fear, general discomfort, feeling of anxiety prevail and interfere with the natural process of receiving, developing and nurturing knowledge. It may be the fear of failure, fear of not being able to have a say, fear of being ignored; a psychological suppression. Counselling service for students is not available in the most universities of Ukraine. Students do not have a possibility to talk about what is affecting their academic or personal life.

A need to alter the approach towards the very idea of education, evaluation, and cooperation is obvious and essential. I know that our universities are implementing Bologna process into the educational system, but it cannot be suddenly changed. It is not only the question of new books and materials versus the old teaching resources; this issue concerns the attitude of the professors and tutors in Ukrainian universities, as well as the students. Changing the way the educational system in Ukraine works should be a very thorough and meticulous process.

I heard many fellow students of Ukrainian universities, studying at the department of foreign languages say that professors teach the students about the language, not the language itself. We do not practice our skills; this is number one complaint of the language students especially. We do not have time for speaking, writing, inventing, addressing the topics, or creating, instead we are taught to learn and forget. Many of our students look disinterested; many professors are not satisfied with their jobs. And surely enough such attitude breeds no cooperation, no accord whatsoever.

I am always ready to speak up and share my ideas with others, I feel that university should serve as the place where individuals have to express themselves and show the maximum of their abilities. In my case, I have always felt that I go to university to be tested and evaluated, but not to be listened to, or understood, supported or argued with. The limitation of natural abilities is a very important problem for the students, who feel they can do more without having this chance. According to Patricia Cross, "the task of the excellent teacher is to stimulate "apparently ordinary" people to unusual effort. The tough problem is not in identifying winners: it is in making winners out of

ordinary people.” This is the clue for an effective teaching. Now, to my mind, higher education in Ukraine is withering, drying up like a flower in a very old book. And speaking about the books, we study hardbacks written back in 1970s. That makes me think somebody doesn’t realize it is 21st century now. I dream to see the educational system of Ukraine blossoming and flourishing.

I dare suppose these problems’ origin lies in the archaic idea of teaching and evaluating that has been rooted in the conscience of Ukrainian educators since the times of the USSR. Our education system needs to be reformed, but not at once, not in a day, it is a painstaking process, which will take years, because it is not only going to change the materials, books and technical equipment, but also the minds of the real people who work and study.