

**EdCW 2020****International Scientific and Practical Conference Education in a Changing World: Global Challenges and National Priorities****TODAY'S EDUCATION: THE TECHNOLOGY BREAKTHROUGH  
AND THE PRESERVATION OF TRADITIONS**

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**Abstract**

Within international discourse, the scientific conceptualization, interpretation of concepts and processes of modern education occupied by digitalization is following an evolutionary path which has not reached its culminating point yet. This determines the presence of various pedagogical attitudes in the reflection of the present and the future of education and of the mission of people involved. Many researchers suggest their own narrative evaluation of phenomena existing in education today. In a wide scientific discourse, the correlation between the methodology of mass digitalization, which claims to be innovative, and the existing pedagogical traditions supported by the personality-oriented humanitarian component of education is problematized. The authors reveal a scientific vision of the reality in the digitalization era of Russian education and demonstrate how the individuals involved influence it. The article presents anthropologically reflected experience in building competent and conscious Coexistence of people of different generations – students, teachers, parents in the recent situation of forced distance learning. This facilitated the creation of a complete picture of educational environment in the digital era, the identification of the role and mission of each individual involved. The authors' thinking about co-scholarization in digital educational environment is based on anthropological traditions of pedagogical theory and practice. This scientific, pedagogical vision is the authors' attempt to motivate everyone involved in education to think seriously what one cannot but take into account in his/her aspirations and actions, what he/she still has to do in order to make education of the present a firm foundation for education of the future.

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*Keywords:* Childhood, competent parenting, digitalization, education, family, pedagogical discourse

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## 1. Introduction

The issue ‘Will education ever be the same?’ has been brought up by pedagogical community in different countries with remarkable persistence and has caused global discussions for several decades. More than half a century has passed since Coombs’ (1968) work was published but the theme of the crisis in education still dominates the programs of the development of national education strategies. The systems of preschool, school, university, parental education manifest, to different extents, the symptoms of the crisis which brings about discussions in social sciences about the realities of their present and future, stimulates the development of a pedagogical vision of the nearest or distant future in education which is able to meet the needs of society, economy and new generations (Beauvais, 2017; Missingham, 2017; OECD, 2018; UNESCO, 2016).

At the global level, such organizations as UNESCO and UNICEF have a considerable influence on education and the determination of policy in this sphere. And thus we think that many individuals involved in education are looking forward to the publication of *The Futures of Education: Learning to Become* report (forthcoming, late 2021).

This UNESCO initiative was an impetus for our reflections on the development of Russian pedagogy and education in an increasingly complex, uncertain and unstable world. And in this we are not alone. Contemporary Russian studies in the field of social sciences show that in Russia large-scale or targeted innovations, primarily technological ones, have become or are only becoming attributes of modern culture (Baidenko, 2018; Elkina, & Bebenina, 2019; Ivanov, & Ivanova, 2018; Shustova & Svorotova, 2017). They give rise to a global anticipation of a breakthrough that will no longer allow the education system to remain in the transmission paradigm. We see that in today’s education the established national pedagogical traditions are being replaced by new values and cultural standards of the global society. They form new knowledge, new methodological approaches to research, which should not only fill the lacunae in scientific knowledge, but also are intended to achieve a research breakthrough in the sphere of education.

As active teachers and lecturers with long-term professional experience working in the Russian education system we are concerned not only about the future of education in Russia, but also about its present. We believe that regardless the approaches taken as the basis for scientific pedagogical research, be they civilizational, problem-solving or paradigmatic, the scale and humanistic orientation of created knowledge will be determined by the individuals involved in education.

## 2. Problem Statement

Problem Statement is determined by the conflict between optimistic and pessimistic scenarios of education development in the present and by the predictions about its future. It is the starting point for our scientific and pedagogical search for effective ways to adequately integrate the subjects of education (students, teachers, parents) into the new educational realities. The present paper is a part of the authors’ study in the sphere of education, parenting and childhood in which one of the stages is devoted to the pedagogical understanding of the ongoing processes in education in the context of digitalization and the

experience of interaction between schools and families with children during the period of forced self-isolation, as well as assessing the prospects and opportunities of the individuals involved in the educational environment transformed by new realities.

### **3. Research Questions**

- Does today's education lose its loyalties to the pedagogical traditions and the personality-oriented component of education and research in the context of digitalization?
- How do the most important social institutions – school and family – interact in modern education to achieve competent and conscious COexistence in the interests of children and adults – parents and teachers?

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

This study intends to substantiate the authors' scientific and pedagogical vision of social and educational reality with regard to the influence exerted by the individuals involved and to present a true and fair view of modern educational environment.

### **5. Research Methods**

The research methods are:

- the anthropological approach provided an opportunity for establishing the correlation between popular concepts of innovative renewal in education and traditional views undeservedly forgotten by the scientific community and practitioners;
- the critical analysis, including synthesis and the generalization of advanced scientific ideas on the problems of the innovative vector of education development in a broad scientific discourse; systematization and concretization in the discourse of education, family and childhood contributed to revealing of competent parenting as a pedagogical phenomenon of modern educational environment;
- an implicit comparison made it possible to describe the positive trends in education in the digital era with regard to the logic of the development of competent parenting and to demonstrate the promising role of these trends in improving the system of interaction between school and family;
- the authors' personal pedagogical experience, observation, survey, interview, quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

## 6. Findings

### 6.1. Education in the context of digitalization: the breakthrough in the sphere of methodological innovations or the revival of traditions

The global digitalization that has occupied our educational space is causing some concern. The main source of the worry is those really authentic foundations of national school where the humanitarian component has persistently been a source of personality formation and development both for educators and learners of different age and level of proficiency; where humanitarian knowledge while being developed has fueled methodological studies and promoted innovations. The established interdisciplinary strategies allowed their followers to comprehensively use the rich arsenal of humanitarian knowledge. In this process of methodological innovative reflection, general philosophical problems of social communication, social ecology, the value and integrity of human existence were revealed.

Today there is no need to justify ourselves that we are allegedly not against the digitalization, which has blurred the boundaries of classrooms through massive open online courses, video lectures, network peer learning, simulators that have practically replaced printed textbooks, and soon, as the adherents of digitalization predict, will abolish the physical presence of a teacher in the classroom. Despite some skepticism caused by certain data and the current state of affairs in the implementation of digital learning, which appears in the reflections of some researchers (Schleicher, 2018; Shustova & Svorotova, 2017; Yukiko Inoue-Smith, 2019), the process of digitalization of education encounters far fewer technological obstacles than methodological ones. As in this path we have to “master a new pedagogical paradigm, introducing a shift into school didactics: from teaching to learning” (Baidenko, 2018, p. 137). And this fortress is to be attacked in the context of digitalization. What is then the essence of this revolution, which is called conceptual and methodological which “will seriously change the organizational culture of educational institutions?” (Baidenko, 2018, p. 143).

The international studies offer all of us including those who ‘studied in the USSR’ the following measures as innovative revolutionary changes of both organizational, pedagogical methods and technologies, principles of organizing the educational process and more global theoretical and methodological scientific improvement: focusing on the learner; changing the role of the educator – the transition from teaching to instruction in the context of certain learning environment and learning situation and further to counselling; the orientation of learning towards goals and results; promoting self-organized and active learning; focusing on the motivational, volitional and social aspects of learning; the connection between knowledge acquisition and the development of a learning strategy (Edmonstone et al., 2019; Labaree, 2017; EUA’s Initiatives to establish European dimension on learning and teaching, 2020). At the same time, with some ‘apologetic’ connotations, they mention digitalization, which though having a huge transformative power, still cannot be considered the goal of education, but needs a broader context of the educational mission of educational institutions; it is also said that digitalization is extremely necessary, otherwise we will lag behind (what a discovery...), that its implementation requires a proper preparation of the infrastructure of the educational institution and considerable funding.

Today, on the background of not always skillful but large-scale digitalization in Russia, there is a presentiment of a pedagogical revolution in an attempt to resolve the “insoluble contradictions”

(Solovejchik, 1989). The past, as an objective reality, always exists in the present through the embodied scientific heritage, which helps us cope with fiction and hoax. Unfortunately, in today's education, so enthusiastic about digitalization, the personality-oriented humanitarian component of teaching and research is being diluted. The attempts to digitize and permanently transmit the best methodological prototypes depersonalize the pedagogical process because every face-to-face meeting with the Teacher (the Master) is unique, individual, it implicitly gives each of the participants of the communicative event a special sense. It is impossible to replace what the presence of the teacher means – the author's extralinguistic means, the author's discourse that every time transform depending on the reaction of the audience and their understanding of the subject discussed. That is why; the bright personalities and the achievements of their scientific schools forgotten by their homeland and education deserve a deep study by their contemporaries in order to revive with a modern twist in a new scientific and educational context. Isn't the education of the present aware of the concepts that are now described as innovative, namely: focusing on the student, changing the role of the teacher, the orientation of learning towards goals and results, promoting independence and activity, motivation, social inclusion, etc.? This is the well-known 'pedagogy of cooperation' – a theory that has been developing in Russian pedagogical theory and practice since the second half of the 20th century. It was based on the generalized national and foreign pedagogical concepts of L. N. Tolstoy, K. D. Ushinsky, S. T. Shatsky, V. A. Sukhomlinsky, A. S. Makarenko, J. J. Rousseau, J. Korczak, F. Bakule, K. Rogers, S. L. Soloveichik, Sh. A. Amonashvili (Astafieva, 2018) and many others, who, unfortunately, have been practically 'removed' from modern education. And this despite the fact that for us, the generation of today's teachers, and, for sure, for the future teachers too, the experience of educators of the older generations may turn out to be both a source of methodological innovation and a replica of traditional but unfairly forgotten knowledge.

## **6.2. COexistence of people of different generations in today's education.**

Today's education makes more and more apparent the fact that parents of Generation X differ from parents of Generation Y. Their disparate perception of parenting is determined not only by a temporal gap but, first of all, by a cultural divide associated with differences in the attitude towards well-being, social role, the ways and forms of communication. It is their perception that influences the relationship between the parents and the school which their children attend and shows parents' involvement or non-involvement in education in general.

'New parents' is the name often used for parents of Generation Y. Does it mean that parents of Generation X should be considered the generation of 'old' parents who are maintaining an outdated lifestyle, world outlook and values that determine their parenting? From the pedagogical point of view such claims are dubious. We do believe that in today's education the emphasis should be moved away from a simplified vision of the generation gap towards a new quality of modern parenting for both generations of parents. Parents' firm intention to participate in school life indicates that they have clearly formulated social demand: to be recognized competent in parenting. It is competent parenting that is becoming a new quality of parenting in the present and in the future and determines the scenario of interaction between parents and schools, the older and younger generations. The winner will be the one who realizes it as early as possible. Obviously, in order to ensure the future of education, in the present it

should teach COexistence to people of different generations and satisfy everyone's educational needs. This applies to different generations of parents, and different generations of teachers, and students as the youngest generation in education today.

The task to meet the urgent needs that form a societal demand for education in a fast-changing world appears more and more complicated but still remains one of the most important ones not only for Russian education. It is discussed by the researchers in different countries who present their own scientific vision, pedagogical experience and the prospects that could promote and support the aspiration of people of different generations to learn to COexist in educational environment (Faircloth, 2020; Proctor et al., 2020; Sharp, 2020; Thorburn, 2015).

In this context we will present our own pedagogical vision of how school and family demonstrate competent and conscious COexistence in the interests of children and adults – parents and teachers. We are convinced that modern school is able to determine possibilities and strengths of the interaction between educators and parents in the processes of children's co-upbringing and co-scholarization and to perceive both parents and children as their active and competent participants but not as 'consumers' who buy education services. In addition, our pedagogical experience shows that there is no crisis in parents' aspiration for education. From what we have observed most parents express their readiness for learning in order to be able to competently interact with their own children and teachers. It proves our pedagogical assurance that modern parents have a new quality of parenting. It is competent parenting which means that a parent is sensible to the child's needs and warm-hearted but successfully keeps the balance between parental love and parental control and, what is the most important, realizes who his/her child is. Such parents are ready and able to competently interact with different actors of education and upbringing and to successfully demonstrate their parental competences. These parents define their parental demand for modern education in the following way: school together with family should teach children to live an interesting, intense and full-fledged life. Sharing child's cognitive enthusiasm and school's initiatives on empowerment of parents in children's co-upbringing and co-education these parents with the aspiration for a new quality of competent parenting become organizers and participants of ecological excursions, local lore walks, patriotic actions, and projects devoted to their professions. We meet such parents oriented towards parental education and different forms of self-learning in schools quite often. They prefer to spend time with children in technology and science parks, robotics club, museums of Nature and Science instead of sitting on the couch and watching TV at home. At the same time, they widely use digital technologies as natural reality for communication but unfortunately not often for education and self-learning.

Let us turn to the experience of the recent past, when teaching moved to the distance mode, which brought to light the digital divide among families with children. This problem is still relevant for many countries (Alanazi & Eddy, 2020; Danilova et al., 2019; Shuffelton, 2020). In our case, it became possible to reduce the existing digital divide among families with children in a particular school thanks to the parents who run a digital volunteer program. Throughout the entire period of distance learning, they provided technical and online support to families with children. Digital parent volunteers provided large families with gadgets for free (this refers to the material well-being of each specific family). They also provided assistance to those who needed it, be it a parent or a student or even a teacher, in using online

services and platforms. They brought together the students, supervised the homework in the online mode, and organized educational leisure for the children and their parents. As teachers, we were pleased with the fact that in the regime of forced self-isolation, parents' conversation groups remained in demand and retained the connection between parents and teachers in a digital format. Video conferencing involving interpersonal interaction of the participants allowed the parents to satisfy their need for a mutual exchange of parenting experience in the current situation. These groups became important for every parent in building and / or restoring mutual trust, confidence in their parenting role, and increasing self-recognition. Aren't these needs determining the quality of competent parenting? While analyzing our own pedagogical experience of the online organization of conversation groups, we consider them as a pedagogical toolkit that proved its effectiveness in a new educational reality. They fostered a new quality of relationship between parents and educators creating a common understanding of the importance of competent actions in the interests of children's well-being. Today we can confidently say that in the situation of forced distancing the experience of learning and interaction was positive. This experience which brought together parents and teachers became the experience of a competent and conscious COexistence in a digital educational environment in the best interests of every child.

In June 2020, we conducted a survey of 530 parents at schools of the city of Tula (Russia) who received the assistance and support from digital parent volunteers. It showed that for the parents the experience of online education provided for their children did not become either critical or hopeless. It was a 'real ordeal' for only 12% of the parents surveyed; for 24% it became 'an adventure and brought back childhood'; made 'sympathize with his/her child' (11%); made 'think about the prospects for the child's learning' (18%); inspired a 'more attentive parental attitude to the child's education and upbringing' (35%). It is noteworthy that among the difficulties the parents faced during the distance learning period they mentioned their ignorance of online educational platforms and the lack of experience of online interaction with teachers. For us, the survey data and the lesson learned from the experience of distance education once again proves that digital world handling in education must be taught to students, parents and teachers alike. And this learning should be proactive, i.e. provide an augmented respond to the request, which means that it gives more than asked for.

In this context, the recourse to pedagogical traditions as the source of methodological innovations and the personality-oriented humanitarian component of education can help parents and educators find the ways of expressing their various roles in a unique scenario of co-upbringing and co-scholarization as well as gain and demonstrate their competences in the child's interests. This will become a beginning of competent and conscious COexistence of people of different generations in education of the future but requires the changes in the ways of action of school and families with children in its present.

## **7. Conclusion**

Digitalization, spreading to almost every corner of the world and gradually changing it, is neither a good nor a disaster for the individuals involved in education today. Undoubtedly, it has shattered the monopoly of school as the only place and form of education, expanded the educational routes of people of different generations, to some extent inspired the scientific communities to methodological

breakthroughs, which we have to assess in the education of the future. But it is digitalization that makes the personality-oriented humanitarian component of education of the past, present and future more valuable, provides an opportunity to approach the search for solutions to eternal pedagogical problems in specific situations, using the experience of the richest Russian and foreign pedagogical heritage.

Each next generation in education has the chance to establish their own traditions, but they should do it in the dialogue and interaction with the previous generations. In a rapidly changing world of education ruled by digital technology the traditions allow preserving the foundations of community, which is of special significance both for school and family. School and family in their turn become able to preserve traditions, to bring together all the individuals involved in education, those who have already begun to act in the present – to learn the competent and conscious coexistence of people of different generations for education of the future. We see this future as bright, exciting the further development of modern pedagogical science, as well as on public policy in education for solving its practical problems.

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