

# FUNCTIONAL LITERACY – CRITERIA TO QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

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**ABSTRACT:** THE PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER IS TO PRESENT FUNCTIONAL LITERACY AS NEW CONCEPT IN THE BULGARIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND DEFINING CAN IT TO BE CRITERIA TO QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL PROCESS. THE CONCEPT "FUNCTIONAL LITERACY" IS NEW OF SCIENCE. IN THE LAST YEARS IS EDUCATION ACCEPTING AS RESULT OF THE NECESSITIES PERSONALITY AND REQUIREMENT THE SOCIETY. THIS RESULT IS EFFECT AND DIMENSION WITH CONCEPT "FUNCTIONAL LITERACY". IT FORMING AND DEVELOPMENT ARE ENFORCE OF THE CONTINUOUSLY ENHANCEMENT REQUIRES TOWARD EDUCATION LEVEL. THIS ENHANCEMENT REQUIRES IS RESULT OF THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS AND IT IS DEFINED OF QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL PROCESS.

**KEY WORDS:** FUNCTIONAL LITERACY, QUALITY OF EDUCATION

IN recent years, the efforts of all education systems in the world are focused on the quality of the educational process. It determines the competitiveness of educational institutions. Leading this idea in our country has brought sweeping changes to the education system. Need to redefine the objectives of the Bulgarian education to the new requirements of the highly dynamic economy and labor market within the European Union. Only an educated nation may be rich and prosperous.

**The purpose** of this research report is:

- To present the functional literacy as a new concept in the Bulgarian education system and
- To determine it to be a criterion for the quality of education.

IN one of the members of the EU treaty obliges the community to stimulate the improvement of the quality of education, each member country pays special attention to curricula, the organization of its educational system, cultural and linguistic diversity. This clause is a consequence of the fact that every fourth person on the planet is illiterate, according to UNESCO, which requires serious decisions on overcoming this problem. The importance of literacy is generated by social conditions and requirements. It provides each individual and cultural community the opportunity to learn the local culture, accumulated over the centuries as a public experience of regional importance. It provides opportunities for personal development and community-based integration.

**SKILLS** that provide mobility in the performance of professional activities become increasingly necessary for both individuals and for the effective functioning of society as a whole. Gradually education became associated as a result not only literacy and mastering the basics of science, and one category that provides greater involvement with the most current needs of the individual and society category that shows a higher level of commitment to quality of education. Thus arises the concept of functional literacy. It is the result of constantly increasing requirements to education, which should allow for the preparation of both general and professional culture, including social, economic, technical, technological, etc. competence.

**AT** the beginning of the term functional literacy covered the process of forming the basic knowledge and skills necessary to be a man (reading and writing). Gradually expanded the meaning of the term and it is within the curriculum as an educational core, which integrates knowledge, skills, attitudes and ways of adapting the adolescents in the amendments of the world in which they live, resulting in different subjects at school.

**OVER** the past two decades, the concept of functional literacy goes beyond the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, because nowadays these three parameters are not enough of a person to function effectively in a modern society.

**THE** formation of functional literacy is required by the human need to interact with the external environment and the fastest to adapt to it. Based on this concept of functional literacy is defined as the quality and level of personality and education, but as a structure of competences can be seen as both a goal and a factor for quality education.

**THE** term "functional literacy" means the level of education required of every person to be able to properly and fully exist in the society in which it is located. It is the "minimum volume competences", ensuring the proper functioning of the individual in the system of social relations, which in turn determine a person's ability to interact with the external environment and the fastest to adapt to it.

**ONE** can be functionally literate in a certain period of his life, according to Totseva, "but remaining at this level of education without it increases updated without improve their personal skills and qualities may be that after a few years is not able to meet the requirements to its level of literacy and education, due to its unpredictable conditions. So he turns functionally illiterate "[3, p. 32]. Consequently, the functional literacy is characterized as a stage and aspect of continuous education of man. It appears as the extent necessary for the existence of personality and its successful functioning in a modern environment and its development.

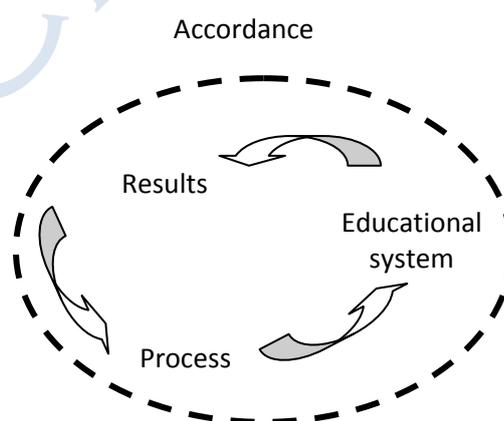
**THE** term "functional literacy" can be described as a summary structure that is a combination of different types of activities and abilities in their continuous development become a certain kind of literacy. So functional literacy becomes a quality of personality, characterized by the following main features:

- The ability for conscious choice of professional education and career development, competent and effective problem solving in professional activities;
- Knowledge of business skills to analyze concrete economic and financial situations;
- Knowledge and understanding of their rights and obligations in the wider context of social life self-solve marital problems, domestic, protection of personal rights and orientation in their duties;

- Ability to communication activities in an unfamiliar environment, mastering the "language" of verbal and non-verbal communication, ability to mutual understanding and collaboration;
- Awareness of the peculiarities of society, orientation in the opportunities offered by life satisfaction and development of their spiritual interests, skills to solve social problems and protect common interests;
- Knowledge of natural sciences, social sciences and humanities, as well as historical and contemporary cultural values;
- Knowledge and understanding of moral norms, rules of official or other labels skills to behave in various situations;
- Preparedness for life in the modern world, orientation problems and its values, as well as moral norms of society;
- Ability for orientation in the world of the art and technology;
- And many other different areas of competence necessary for the normal functioning of a person in the society in which it is located.

**ALL** this leads us to believe that functional literacy is a very important concept in scientific knowledge about education. *Formation and its development imposed by the continuous improvement of the requirements to the level of education, which strives to create basic skills in man with which he successfully carried out their professional activities and functions in everyday life. This increase in requirements is the result of social development in its various dimensions and is determined by the quality of the educational process.*

**QUALITY** of education is multispectral and complex structure. According to G. Ibragimov quality is a measure of compliance with standards and requirements. It is expressed in a balanced correlation between the outcome, process and educational system (Fig. 1). The quality of education is subjected to the relationship between needs, objectives and norms (standards).



**Figure 1** Quality of education

**To** have a quality educational process must be bound by the terms:

- *Effectiveness* - the degree of realization of planned activities and their achievements and the relationship between results achieved and resources used.
- *Standardization* - subordination of the approved results achieved by certain rules governing principles and characteristics of various methods. There are different types obrazovateelni standards relating to educational resources, curricula and overall results. The educational standard is level and uslvie the various stages of the educational process and the interrelationship of these stages. The main components of educational standards are input, process and output data.
- *Control and measurement* - activities, including an assessment of the characteristics of the educational process and compare the results obtained with established standards. The control is an integral part of the management of education.

IN the UNESCO report of 2005 on the "Education for All" focuses on the fact that "in recent years, educational policies are formed based on the quantitative aspects of education" and that there is agreement on the need for education high quality, but not the content of that concept (UNESCO, 2005).

**INDICATORS** of quality of education in the formation of functional literacy in general can be reduced to the following:

- the use of active learning methods (ie. Innovation);
- implementation of various educational technologies;
- introduction of new information and communication technologies;
- changed roles of student and teacher: student partner, teacher consultant;
- availability of state educational requirements for learning and assessment.

**TO** take account of the quality of education in these indicators should be should be considered one of the most important factors - the potential of the school, ie qualified teaching staff.

**ACCORDING** to the educational paradigm roles of teacher and student learning are changing. The teacher becomes a sole source of information in the consultant and the student from a passive object of impact becomes an active partner of the teacher in pedagogical interaction.

**THROUGH** interactive learning conditions are created for the interaction of individuals in the group, leading to overcome obstacles to communication and increasing mental and practical activity. Interactive training creates conditions for the formation of critical thinking, provoke desire for personal expression and self-esteem in students. Its application in practice leads to breaking down stereotypes and eliminate the distance between individuals in the group. Through interactive build a better functional literacy and achieves high quality in education.

**CONSTRUCTION** of functional literacy is socially meaningful activity, successful implementation requires the establishment of a comprehensive system of technological training, covering all schools and all components of the educational protses. Tay principal result of increasing technological change is the difference in levels of technological capabilities and understanding. Workforce of the future must have the ability to use, manage and understand technology.

**In conclusion** we can say that the high level of functional literacy determines the quality of the educational process. This is because these two concepts are achieved as a result of the same goal of any educational system.

**FUNCTIONAL** literacy is a concept with a wide range of formation. It is formed as a quality of personality that includes a variety of competences in order for a person to function properly, according to the changes of the world in which he lives.

**FUNCTIONAL** literacy is associated with the concept of "lifelong learning" because it is the degree of development of the personality at different stages in her life. Its formation begins in the wider context of general education passes later as a requirement of vocational training and continuing as one of sistemoopredelyashtite factors of various forms of life-long learning.

**IN** order to achieve high quality of the educational process must be addressed first pedagogical staff. It must be well qualified and its potential to meet the requirements of modern society. The second important are educational programs. They must meet the expectations of students and their interest for more complete training. And the third has to exercise control in the management of educational institutions. Quality of education can be defined as a balanced process between the individual and the requirements of society.

**IN** a quality educational process unlocks students' interest and motivate their development throughout their period of existence. They in each period of their development will be functionally literate individuals worthy of the society in which they live.

**FUNCTIONAL** literacy is considered as an educational category, through which can be measured specific experience and a specific set of competencies that give important new shades of Education. The link between literacy and functional requirements of the public can seek to answer the questions "What?", "How?" And "Why?".

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