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## **THE ORGANIZATION OF THE DIDACTIC PROCESS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CHALLENGES POSED BY MODERNITY**

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The paper deals with the problem of the higher education effectiveness in the sense of preparing a graduate for the contemporary labor market. The subject under consideration is to analyze the methods of organizing the teaching process at higher education institutions in the terms of education effectiveness. The author describes the traits and predispositions of a graduate personality to meet the requirements and the expectations of the constantly changing modern society. He outlines the initiatives of the Bologna process, which aim is to help the European higher education systems to cope with the challenges of the global society contemporary environment. The paper defines the criteria of distinguishing the models of organizing the didactic process at universities. It stresses the effectiveness of the model, which allows students to take advantages of the teacher's help and guidance for their own personal development.

*Key words:* labor market; model of organizing didactic process; curriculum; knowledge, skills, competence; lecturer-student relationships.

### **Introduction**

One of the most important questions pertaining to functioning of higher education institutions is the question of the effectiveness of education, in the sense of possibly the best preparation of a graduate for the contemporary labour market. The *raison d'être* of universities is providing education to students, that being conditioned by recruiting candidates for students. One of the criteria which may influence the candidates' decisions is acquiring a satisfactory position on the labour market. Thus, the method a university may employ in order to improve the level of education it provides, so as to prepare its students to win those high positions on the labour market, is of utmost importance. One of the essential, although not always appreciated, factors influencing effectiveness of education at a higher education institution and the actual preparation of its graduates for their future careers is the organisation of studies at a given university itself. The subject under consideration in my address is analysis of the methods of organising the teaching process at higher education institutions from the point of view of the effectiveness of education.

To put it simply, we may assume that universities have two methods to choose from. The first one places students in a position where all their obligatory

classes and the scope of knowledge they are to acquire have been planned for them in advance and their task is to attend the classes, assimilate the knowledge and prove, acting according to prescribed procedures, that they have assimilated that knowledge. According to other assumptions, learning and knowledge assimilation is conditioned by many factors and is achieved through the students' initiative, through their choices. Providing students with the opportunity to choose the education path themselves changes the nature of studying and the nature of their relationships with their academic teachers and trainers. The consequences of choosing an individual method of organising one's studies significantly affects the relationship between the teachers and the students. In the first case, a teacher provides the information and expects the student to acquire it, while in the second case, the student takes advantage of the teacher's help and guidance for his own personal development.

The essential thing in the process is to find out which method of organisation of studies at a higher education institution is better in preparing students to meet the requirements and the expectations connected with undertaking tasks and roles in the constantly changing modern society.

Knowledge and skills of graduates vs. challenges posed by the present times.

**One can say that** changes on the contemporary labour market lead to considerable decrease in the demand for the activities performed without any personal innovation, activities subject to external assessment, where the nature of the activity itself or of its performance allows comparison to a certain mode or standard. The scope of activities within the occupational fields where there are not and where there cannot be any predefined standards, because a given activity itself, or its performance, is innovative in character, has not been present on such a scale ever before. Nowadays, the character of the degree of complexity of qualifications and skills required for most of the jobs is such that the employees make decisions themselves and that giving orders and checking whether they have been carried out is ineffective. The need for making maximum use of the employees' possibilities induces to giving the employees freedom of action in performance of their tasks – it is the employees themselves who search for optimal solutions. The employees' personal autonomy concerning the organisation of their own activities has increased.

Many occupational tasks require social skills, the acquisition of which is, to a great extent, connected with the model of relations assimilated at a university through the organisation system of didactics. Abandoning the contest and competition, the system of subordination and hierarchy in favour of cooperation and team work is an imperative.

The relations that can be found in other areas of our activity are of similar importance. The choice of the way, the style of life becomes a genuine choice. The system of social solutions, the act of decision making in relation to different

matters becomes the system of negotiation and mediation, the system of seeking solutions which are unknown prior to performing the necessary procedures. This makes functioning and succeeding in contemporary environment require numerous skills and traits of personality, predispositions and competence, such as:

- Personal initiative,
- Positive motivation,
- Independence,
- Problem solving ability,
- Learning skill,
- Knowing one's worth,
- Communication skills,
- Conflict solving ability,
- Effective cooperation skill,
- Ability to help others,
- Negotiating skills,
- Assertiveness,
- Empathy,
- Knowledge of the active listening technique,
- Activity and courage for expressing and defending one's opinions and beliefs in public,
- Understanding and appreciating the value of work,
- Ability to hierarchize values and tasks,
- Responsibility for one's own results and for results achieved by one's team,
- Self-discipline and focusing on the task,
- Ability to delegate and share tasks and responsibility,
- Appreciating the value of criticism and evaluation,
- Ability to use high-tech equipment,
- Ability to establish relations and cooperate with other people,
- Ability to influence other people's behaviour,
- Organisational and management skills,

One of the important initiatives whose aim it is to help the European higher education systems to cope with the challenges and requirements of effective functioning of their graduates in the contemporary environment of a global society is the initiative called the Bologna process. The initiative incorporates activities leading to:

- Adopting a system of clear and comparable diplomas;
- Introducing a two-stage systems of study based on two paths of education (BA – MA);

- Introducing a credit-based system of rating students' achievements (ECTS);
- Enhancement of the mobility of students and university employees;
- Enhancement of European cooperation in the field of quality of education;
- Enhancement of the dimension of the European higher education system.

The said proposals point to the issue of organisation of study as it assumes another types of organisation of the didactic processes of studies than the ones that have been applied by universities for years.

*Two models of organising the didactic process in graduate schools*

The method of organising the didactic classes employed by a university is not of a lesser importance to the effectiveness of education than the content itself.

A set of criteria ought to be established for determining the model of organisation of didactics at universities, which would allow characterisation of the models. The introduction of such models will be possible if we realise the differences of individual universities within this field. It seems useful here to formulate questions to which the practices applied at universities would be the answer:

- What is the ratio of the amount of hours of compulsory classes to the optional classes for the students,
- What is the number of students in groups in which the didactic classes are organised,
- What are the possibilities for choosing the examiner and form of the exam;
- What are the possibilities for choosing the education path (eligibility of subjects) and the pace of the studies,
- Is the curriculum determined, complete and the students are to follow it or is the curriculum open and it is up to the student to choose the courses, the content, maintaining a certain compulsory canon,
- Are the students' choices limited to courses and content or do they also include choosing lecturers of individual courses,
- What are the methods of limiting the number of students in a class, either by the number of candidates or by the kind of classes,
- What behaviour is expected of the students,
- Who decides about membership in a given group,
- How does the tutorial system work (the system of educational and didactic guidance).

Depending on the answers to these questions, two models of didactics organisation at higher education institutions can be distinguished. We can speak of disparate approaches to perceiving and analysing the lecturer – student relations.

The first concept is a set of compulsory subjects and a determined period of time for their completion. Everything that the students can learn and find out is planned in the curricula. They must be completed in order to achieve the set goals. One only needs to find an appropriate way of making the students assimilate the predetermined knowledge and skills. They are there to be taken advantage of, to be acquired according to the prescribed procedures.

All this is organised by specifying all the courses and syllabus contents, which neither teachers nor students can influence. Students have no influence on the kind of classes they will have to attend or lecturers who conduct the classes. Their activities follow a predetermined model of acquiring knowledge and competence, predetermined data, already existing in reality. They only have to find it, reproduce and acquire. A graduate is a predetermined product, created as a result of programmed behaviour of participants of the didactic process at a higher education institution. Students and teachers perform according to the set of externally imposed regulations defining their role, to which they have to adapt.

The second approach is based on guidance and counselling concerning choice of courses, designing a course of study. The process of education is widely individualized, the system of educational and didactic guidance plays an important part here and the progress in education is expressed not only through marks, but also through credits. The tutors express their opinions on the choices made by the students. This means flexible curricula, possibility for all students to make their choices; this means knowledge and skills assimilated in the course of direct contact with the teachers they choose. The skills, knowledge and competence assimilated by each individual student depends on a number of factors that the organisers of the didactic process are aware of and they know they cannot control all of them. Therefore, they allow the students to choose and make decisions, trusting that in this way they will assimilate knowledge and skills which will be adequate to their interests and abilities.

Graduates are not fully determined individuals. They are results of everything that flows from the general framework of organisation of their studies. Teachers and students meet and the teachers put forward their offer of the “meetings”, as a result of which the students gain something that becomes an element of their development. Their goal is such organisation of the process of education as to enable the students to make decisions concerning their course of studies and the syllabus. So that the students can decide not only when they want to study, but also what they want to study.

### **Conclusion**

The difference between these methods of organising didactic classes at a higher education institution is the same as between obligation and freedom of

choice. The traditional method of class organisation involves a hidden conviction that the decision-makers know what knowledge and skills the students ought to have and, furthermore, that they know how to pass this knowledge to the students, who are mere passive recipients. These assumptions frequently remain unrevealed. They are accepted without questioning and thus become one of the elements of a hidden curriculum on various levels of education. Such a rigid model of organisation, based on the 19<sup>th</sup> century industry and army, does not correspond to the external challenge with which students and graduates have to deal.

A student who passes from one point to another adapts mainly by not sticking their necks out and trying not to fall into disfavour. If there is no possibility of changing or choosing lecturers, students have to adapt, thus restricting their individuality.

Organisation of the didactic process according to the second model allows students to choose the courses and the lecturers and thus offers them a possibility of finding information they consider to be of importance and choosing lecturers whose way of thinking is close to their own. Consequently, the lecturer-student relations are established in a different way and those relations, in turn, give rise to a different cultural pattern transmitted by the educational system. The cultural pattern where a clear division of the society creates a group of people occupying high positions, who, on account of that fact, have the right to issue orders and whose orders are to be followed and carried out is vanishing. Such educational system was functional in a society where the above mentioned relations were prevailing and where most of the public institutions, mainly the economic ones, which are so important in the democratic – free-market societies, functioned on the basis of such relations.

Answering the question which model of class organisation is a more effective form of assimilation of knowledge and skills that are vital from the point of view of the requirements of the contemporary labour market should not prove difficult. If the students are to be innovative, have social skills, be open to new experience, they ought to go through such university procedures which support the formation of these traits. In my opinion, there is no doubt that flexible organisation of teaching offers more support here. Thanks to such solutions a student becomes an independent subject taking advantage of the possibilities created by the university. By making choices they become more innovative and creative, pursuing the goals, they have defined themselves, which gives them better opportunity for success on the globalised labour market.

**ОРГАНІЗАЦІЯ НАВЧАЛЬНОГО ПРОЦЕСУ  
В КОНТЕКСТІ СУЧАСНИХ ВИКЛИКІВ****Адам Росул***Академії ім. Яна Длугоша м.Ченстохов, Польща*

Розглянуто проблему ефективності вищої освіти у контексті підготовки випускників до сучасного ринку праці. Проаналізовано методи організації навчального процесу у вищій школі з огляду ефективності освіти. Визначено риси, установки особистості випускника, що відповідають вимогам й очікуванням сучасного суспільства. Виокремлено ініціативи Болонського процесу, спрямованого на допомогу Європейським освітнім системам у подоланні труднощів глобального суспільства. Розглянуто критерії розрізнення двох типів моделей організації навчального процесу в університеті. Акцентовано на ефективності моделі, що дає змогу студентам використовувати допомогу й керівництво викладача для особистісного розвитку.

*Ключові слова:* ринок праці; модель організації навчального процесу; навчальний план; знання, уміння, компетентність; взаємини “викладач-студент”.

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