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Под това название от 14 до 16 юни 2019 година се проведе Седмата международна конференция, плод на сътрудничество между Факултета по педагогика на ЮЗУ „Неофит Рилски“, Благоевград, Факултета по образовни науки на Университет „Гоце Делчев“, гр. Щип, Република Северна Македония и Сплитски университет, гр. Сплит, Република Хърватска и Института по педагогика и психология при Череповецки държавен университет, гр. Череповец, Русия.

В рамките на тридневната конференция в отделните научни секции бяха представени доклади по проблеми, свързани с дидактиката и психологията на висшето образование, иновациите в подготовката и квалификацията на учители и други педагогически специалисти, проблемите на предучилищното и училищното образование, иновативните училища в съвременното образование. В конференцията участваха заинтересовани от проблематиката на възпитанието и образованието представители на Югозападен университет „Неофит Рилски“, Софийски университет „Св. Климент Охридски“, Тракийски университет – Стара Загора, Университет „Гоце Делчев“, Щип, Република Северна Македония, Университет на Сплит, Република Хърватия, Череповецки държавен университет, гр. Череповец, Русия, Университет в Ниш, Република Сърбия, Дагестански държавен педагогически университет, гр. Махачкала, Република Дагестан, Руска федерация, както и докторанти от Израел и Гърция.

Резултат от конференцията са текстовете на сборника “Съвременното образование – условия, предизвикателства и перспективи“. Донякъде те сякаш подвеждат. Може би след тях ще останат повече питання, отколкото отговори: има ли нещо сигурно за образованието днес, може ли да се състави обобщаваща картина, не се ли разпадат вижданията за него, така както са разпилени представите за света днес? Всъщност, ако несигурността е отличителна характеристика за времето ни, въпросите са не по-малко значими от отговорите, които се дават на различни проблеми на образованието.

Представените на конференцията изследвания разкриват стремежа на авторите им да анализират различни аспекти от сложните процеси, които протичат в образованието в различни културни и национални особености в отделните страни. В тях говори различна индивидуална чувствителност и

# CONTEMPORARY STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING AT ACADEMIC TEACHING

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**Abstract:** Contemporary academic teaching is a multidimensional process that involves establishing a high level of interaction between the teacher, students and the material that has been teach. It can be improved by applying a numerous of interactive learning and teaching strategies. Which and what kind of strategies can be applied in higher education? What determines their application? What competencies should be possessed by the persons who apply them? These are just some of the questions whose answers we try to answer and present in this paper.

**Key words:** changes, higher education, teachers, students, techniques

## **Introduction**

The modern world, in which we live in, sets in front of us a multitude of questions by whose answers we constantly search: What kind of knowledge do we need to move forward, to be in collusion with the times in which we live, but also to move successfully towards the future? Where we can gain the knowledge that will lead forward? Is it possible to do it in such constructed systems, subsystems of education? If we acquire knowledge through organized systems, what changes should there be made within each system? How to get that knowledge? Who is the key actor for those changes? ....

Changes in the modern world, caused changes in the system of higher education. It is faced before the challenge to educate an individual, capable to move forward with the challenges of its personal profession but, also capable to contribute in personal development and development of the society.

By accepting the Bologna Declaration, the intentions in higher education were aimed toward improvement of its quality. ie. education that is in line with current social and individual needs; an education that will involve the application of modern and creative methods of learning and teaching, education aimed at the realization of the general educational outcomes and development of general and specific competences of the individual.

For these reasons, a number of changes have been introduced: changes in the educational paradigm (professional orientation of the studies, their internationalization, achieving a high level of interdisciplinary, achieving some standardization of the educational processes, constant adaptation to the new scientific and technological achievements); changes in structuring of study programs, creating curricula based on students' competences and learning outcomes; conducting a continuous evaluation of the course and learning outcomes of the students; changes in the way of realization of the higher education; changes in the position and role of students and professors.

## ***Changes in the academic teaching***

When talking about the organization and the realization of the teaching process in higher education, we set a number of questions: How the higher education is conceptualized? What are the key factors in the teaching process and what is the interaction between these factors? Does the academic teaching as it is conceived, dominate the teaching versus learning process? Whether and how students are stimulating for activity? ... a number of questions that require answers ...

If we start from the key determination, according which, teaching is a continuous developmental educational process, which is subject of constant change and improvement, the changes in higher education are also normal. According to accredited study programs, it is necessary to provide quality teaching that the higher education institution should maintain and promote.

As a multidimensional process, in academic teaching there are tendencies for overcoming the weaknesses of the most frequently organized teaching, lessons classes. In this form, the teacher is the main actor, lecturer, which carries out the transfer of knowledge and skills to students while students are in a passive, listening position. This position only occasionally changes in terms of their inclusion through

asking questions and occasional discussions. In this regard, is an interesting thought from Good i Brophy (1994) who point out that the mode of work in which the teacher only teaches, disable the development of social skills, results in exclusion of the student as a result of the "falling" of the concentration, leads only to the acquisition of information, but not the development of specific skills.

Contemporary academic teaching involves the establishment of a high level of interaction between the teacher, the students and the material who is taught. The reason is that in the basics of contemporary, academic teaching is contemporary constructivism which implies: construction of knowledge, knowledge is constructed as a result of the interaction of the teacher and the student; student's activity -the student is an active accomplice in the process of creating knowledge; reflexivity - both students and teachers reflect on the process of learning, teaching, and about their results; collaborative learning - knowledge is created in collaboration and communication between students; research approach- knowledge of students is created by applying the basic principles of research; knowledge development - knowledge is developed and changed according to new experiences. (Čudina- Obradović i M., Brajković, S., 2009:13)

In fact, the modern academic teaching is a dynamic interactive process of teaching and learning. Teaching in which new modern approaches are introduced. It is teaching that leads to the adoption of durable knowledge and the development of lifelong learning skills, which leads in development of creativity, ability for analytical thinking, construction of knowledge, problem solving, teamwork, reflection, self-initiative, responsibility, sense of success. Such form/mode of teaching leads to education of competent experts.

In the academic teaching, according to the Bologna Declaration, the focus is on student, of what he/she does, the achievement of the goals, the outcomes /learning outcomes and the knowledge and competencies the student acquires. The overall organization of teaching is focused on creating learning situations in and through which the learning objectives are realized, but in the same time, the evaluation process is also ongoing (achieved or not).

In this process, teacher has very important role. The teacher is the one who should train young generations to study independently, to become supporters of the idea of lifelong learning. The competencies that one academic teacher should possess refers to following: -competences for curriculum planning and planning of teaching units; providing the necessary information for students through direct instruction or referral to use different sources; mentoring work and providing related information; encourage and actively involve students in various forms of teaching, monitor and evaluation of the achievements of students, critical reflection and evaluation of their own work and preparedness for professional engagement, development of teaching materials and methods of work, achieving empathy and social sensitivity ...They allow him accomplished numerous roles such as: planner, initiator, moderator, instigator, consultant, coordinator, router.

But what actually happens in reality? The results of numerous research, as well as the findings from immediate practice, confirm that the still dominant type of teaching is the lecture-demonstration instruction. Application of innovative practice, project work, research and problem-solving approach, use of multimedia approach and other innovative strategies and models of work is rare and only from time to time. Their application implies implementation of numerous new, contemporary interactive strategies and techniques.

This situation implicated the question that is subject of our work ie what are the reasons for the occasional use of these new modern forms of teaching. The assumption is that insufficient knowledge and insufficient training of teaching staff could be some of the reasons for their non-application in the planning, organization and the realization of the teaching process. In this regard, is the theoretical elaboration associated with modern interactive strategies which can be applied in academic teaching.

### ***Contemporary interactive strategies in academic teaching***

Teaching and learning are the key components of the academic teaching. Teaching precedes learning. It is accomplished with the help of another, most often the teacher. Learning involves independent, physical or mental activity, whose goal is the acquisition of certain knowledge, abilities or habits (cognitive side), and learning how to behave, attitudes, self-motivation - an emotional side. Constant is the need for teaching in the teaching process. The length of instruction depends on a number of factors such as: chronological age, weight of the work, work materials. The modern teaching process means a combination of the process

of teaching and the process of active, creative learning (refers to the rule of the methods, techniques of independent acquisition of knowledge, skills and habits, ie. training for self-learning and permanent education).

Active student learning is possible by applying a number of interactive strategies. They have the task of transferring the activity from the teacher (professor) to students, to help them actively learn, together, collaborating, solving tasks, evaluating their work. Successful accomplishment of this task can be achieved only if they possess specific characteristics, i.e.

- to integrate cognitive and practical activities;
- to comply with the different learning styles;
- promote cognitive interaction with others;
- to enable the development of cognitive processes at a higher level;
- to encourage the reflexive and metacognitive activities;
- to provide support and readiness to carry out tasks;
- to strengthen motivation for learning;
- to enable observation and monitoring student achievements.

In fact, the application of interactive strategies leads to the active involvement of students in the learning process of the anticipated contents from the curriculum; it enables the integration of the procedural with declarative and metacognitive knowledge.

Strategies cover a multitude of methods and procedures, i.e. ways of activating students in the educational process aimed at achieving the tasks of education. The process of improvement of existing strategies, their modernization, innovations, is continuously going on. The need for their modernization stems from the role which they have in developing the needs for learning and creativity, the need for acquiring methodological knowledge, or how is still called knowledge for knowledge , to know how to research, to create and to meet the needs of the student.

The application of various strategies, initiated by the teacher, affects the incitement of the so-called internal motivation of the student, which in turn provides an incentive to the inner challenge to succeed, to know something new, to critically re-examine, accept, to take a new stand, to draw appropriate conclusions. In teaching in general, are increasingly applied so-called dynamic strategies that enable perspectives of learning, teaching, research.

***Interactive lecture*** - One of the oldest educational strategies. Their application in academic teaching implies a different approach in conceptualization of the lectures. It appears in order to overcome the weaknesses of the traditional lecture such as: difficult retention of the concentration, a little remember of what is be heard; only lower levels of opinion are encouraged, mainly the processes of recognition and reproduction (memory) are initiated.

It is based on the constructivist theory of learning according to which the student adopts the material starting from what he knows before. The role of the teacher is in reshaping the teaching material for easier its integration into the knowledge system that the student possesses.

Namely, in conceptualization the lectures, after the presentation from 10-15 minutes the teacher sets new requirements in front of the students, gives them specific instructions for accomplishing the assigned tasks;

The lecture is divided into sequences that always begin with some new concepts or methods, which mean, securing the student's attention. In the process of teaching, especially attention, the teacher devotes to training students for keeping notes. At the end of the whole lecture or at the end of individual parts it is necessary to make summary of the processed material.

***Cooperative learning strategy*** - For cooperative learning is spoken when there is a targeted collaboration and positive interdependence of students divided into pairs or groups who are facing with a common problem or explore a common theme. The aim is to develop mutual understanding, which will serve them to create new ideas, combinations or original innovations. Under the term cooperative learning understand the interpersonal relationships in which participants satisfy their needs, and at the same time

they also take into consideration the needs of the other participants, the cooperation and the adjustment of the participants in a common activity, aimed at achieving a common goal. The main goal of cooperative learning is to facilitate the progress of each student from different aspects. After participating in the cooperative work each member of the group should be able to solve independently, work out the same or similar task. So, just in that case is achieved the main goal of cooperative learning.

Cooperative learning occurs always in situations when participants are divided into microgroups, whose number of members would not be bigger than 6 members. Each group receives different task which should be resolved, ie. by solving all the individual tasks, achieve the ultimate goal: understanding, learning the relevant lesson. The basic features of cooperative learning are: "Positive interdependence", "Together we are stronger", "Together we will swim faster".

It is achieved by setting a common goal towards whose positive resolution all groups are aspiring, with common funds and shared resources.

- Promote face-to-face interaction – sitting together, establishing a common goal, the need for mutual cooperation promotes this kind of interaction;
- Individual responsibility - each member of the group is held accountable for his / her own part of the job as well as responsibility for the success / failure of the group;
- Interpersonal skills and small group skills - it is especially important to learn how to communicate properly, to carry out good communication and to adopt skills of decision-making, leadership, building trust, conflict resolution.
- Evaluating of the group processes and their effects - refers to the constant monitoring of each individual, and the group completely, in terms of the used procedures used, methods, ways of resolving certain problems or situations, as well as the ability to apply acquired knowledge, skills, habits by using a variety of instruments (check lists, questionnaires ...)

**Critical thinking strategies** - refers to strategies which are intended for the purpose to strengthen critical thinking, when students studying an appropriate subject or a problem to which students approach critically, without prejudice i.e. impartial.

**Demonstration strategy** - The goal of this strategy is acquiring new skills among students through observation and imitation, developing thinking skills and problem-solving skills. The crucial meaning of this strategy is that it allows maintaining the interest and enthusiasm of the students for the entire duration of the activity.

**Simulation strategy** -They are usually determined as a reconstruction of the situation or a series of cases that can occur in one environment. Simulations require each student to find a solution based on intermittent training and available information. Once the solution has been found, students are placed in a situation to discuss or to understand the consequences of the decision, So, the goal is to create as close a situation as possible to the real life or life experience of the students. Through this strategy students learn certain principles, skills for understanding and thinking in the cognitive area, psychomotor skills and ways of behavior, they are in a situation to discuss or to see the consequences of the solution. Of course the simulated situations should be in accordance with the age and abilities of students, with their previous knowledge in a particular area. Simulation provides an active approach to learning, facilitates retention, supports the cooperation among students, makes it possible to connect with real life. The restrictions in turn refer to the fact that they are very similar to the game, require time to construct, inadequate are for all the topics and they incite the noise.

**Group discussion strategy** - enables the promotion of thinking skills and decision-making, as well as encouraging different views and opinions from students. It is used to present examples of immediate reality, or solving tasks, way, procedure.

**Learning and teaching strategy** - is based on the laws of the cognitive process. Learning by discovering covers all stages of the cognitive process - perceiving a problem, its definition, through research, simulation and project, own activity in finding solutions. Teaching is a shorter learning process, it is not based on one's own experience, but it uses the experiences of others, systematized in different sources. And here we start from the problem, setting hypotheses, tasks, but to the request of the answer not using their own experience, but the answers are sought and found ready. There are numerous forms of teaching: problem-based teaching - students independently or with the help of the teacher find the problem, defined it, so they pass to the answer. But, solution is given by the teacher or another person demonstrating, explaining or exposing; or the student independently finds it in lexicons, encyclopedias, then it is systematized, explained in a certain way.

Heuristic teaching - the student gradually comes to the decision, comes to the conclusion independently. A heuristic conversation is used which will stimulate the student to think, discuss until the gradual solution of the problem.

Programmed (analytical) teaching consists in doing so that the problem is divided into the basic elements that are presented to the student, and then given him a task that requires a certain activity related to that content. When the student resolves the assignment, he receives feedback on the correctness or malfunction of the implemented and further instructions for work.

**Creation and research strategy** - The most common form of discovery is the research. If it is well prepared, students can determine problems, prepared procedures and try to find a solution. Finally, students should discuss not only the results, but also for the process of requesting the key to the problem and finding a response to it. It is always supported by a range of tasks and includes activities that may have more than one response. The goal is to actively involve students in problem solving and their own learning.

These are just some of the strategies which enables the development of the interest, motivation, critical attitudes and creativity of the students and the teacher.

These may include the use of a variety of techniques such as:

- Reinforced lecture - means a combination of frontal lecture and discussion;
- Insert technique that involves the application of previously acquired knowledge as the basis on which the new knowledge is built;
- Carousel - a technique that involves the rotation of groups working independently and studying a new teaching unit;
- Cube - a technique that allows you to consider the topic from multiple aspects;
- Discussion Network - The goal is to encourage discussion and active participation of students. It deals with the consideration of the question from two opposing sides and the argumentation of one's own views;
- Group research - used in the interpretation of new content, during the preparation of projects on a thematic whole ...

Whether, how and in what way interactive educational strategies and techniques will be applied in academic teaching depends on the capacity of the teaching staff for their application.

Some of the strategies, they introduced during their initial education, but also through active participation in various trainings, seminars.

What is lacks is permanent education of the teaching staff for their application in the teaching process.

This applies especially to young, collaborative staff in higher education institutions, to who is necessary to acquire teaching competencies, which would incorporate competence in applying modern learning and teaching strategies. Education related to modern strategies and approaches should also be part of the continuing professional development of academic teachers.

The higher education in which actively involved both, the teacher and the student, will contribute to the adoption of durable knowledge, development of creativity, a sense of success, development of skills for lifelong learning and interest, motivation for further professional development.



### **Conclusion**

The goal of teaching strategies is the preparation and training for self-learning, self-education, continuous education, creativity and active interpersonal communication between the subjective factors - the teacher, the student and among the students themselves.

The goal is feasible, if one always takes into account the thought "Not to charging heads, but to forming them".

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