

Improving the Quality of Higher Education

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Abstract: University teaching has a great responsibility in preparing students for life in a rapidly changing world. The idea of creating a European space in higher education, which needs to be compatible and harmonized, poses daily the key issues of today's university, which are: how effective, flexible and competitive it is. These issues are directly related to the quality of teaching and learning, i.e., the quality of knowledge they acquire. In this context, the 2013 European Commission document titled Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning in Europe's Higher Education Institutions is particularly significant, which points out that in the process of entering universities as well as during the process of academic advancement, the teaching should be seen as an equally important factor as other conditions for advancement. One of the determinants of quality assurance in higher education is the quality of the teaching-scientific process. It is exactly this paper that aims to analyze the effects of the impact of the didactic methodical way of organizing the teaching on the quality of teaching in higher education. Thus, a questionnaire - a scaler was used to examine the impact of the organization of teaching on the quality. The obtained results will demonstrate the efficiency of higher education and will contribute towards improving the quality of higher education.

Keywords: quality, higher education, students' competencies

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I. INTRODUCTION

The current situation as well as the social development predictions are the main strongholds which dictate the educational goals and outputs, on the basis of which the overall education policy, and consequently the study programs, should be conceptualized. The quality of the study programs also depends on the mobility of students and employees among European countries. In the area of higher education, the term quality assurance applies to all policies, valuation and evaluation processes, as well as actions aimed at ensuring that institutions, programs and acquired qualifications meet specific standards of education. (Euridice 2012)

It can be concluded that the quality of higher education is determined by the quality of the study program, the quality of the teaching-scientific process, as well as the quality of the performance of the educational outputs or the competences acquired by the staff who will complete the study programs. (Gajić, Budić, Lungulov, 2009)

Contemporary high school teaching and learning has a triple mission:

1. To enable the understanding of the world as a condition for dealing with and adapting to it;
 2. To provide active participation in the world, because only in this way is it possible to change and promote it;
 3. To build up own identity in that world, which means understanding the value of the personal contribution, responsibility and place in it. (Working on the European Dimension of Quality, 2002).
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II. QUALITY ASSURANCE

The quality of higher education is the focus of the endeavor to provide more competitive, more quality and more efficient higher education for all and to contribute to the promotion of cooperation between different institutions and countries in Europe. New approaches to education involve the inclusion of modern teaching methods and tools, the implementation of effective learning strategies and much greater participation of students in their own educational process. In this context, university teaching today gives an advantage to the so-called. active methods of work, i.e. methods and techniques that encourage active, responsible and cooperative learning. All these learning methods and conditions create numerous techniques for working in small groups, debate techniques, project work, individual and group presentation, discussions on reading literature. Their application is a result of the need to build abilities for analytical and critical thinking, as well as by empowering students for self-learning and self-education. (Binkley et al., 2012)

New time and new teaching require partners who participate, ask, think, criticize, explore, in that sense, teaching is a kind of place for exchange of experiences, knowledge, information, ideas and suggestions and as such it should be respected and thus should be organized. Challenges, dilemmas and tasks that are intellectually stimulating and interesting should be given to the students.

The teacher as a priority has the programs to be realized and the students to work with, and the choice of the methods and techniques to be used depends on his / her ability to assess their effectiveness in delivering the expected learning outcomes. Therefore, the promotion of teaching in terms of its methodical innovations will mean: creating a university environment that will stimulate the constant expansion of the teaching staff's teaching technique that the professor possesses, selection of them in accordance with the nature and character of the contents to be realized, practical application and creative modification of teaching techniques, as well as reflection, i.e. Constant re-examination of the success in the realization of classes based on students' reaction and personal observations. (Borko, 2004)

Teachers in close co-operation with students and labor market representatives should continue to develop educational outputs and international referential points for an increasing number of new subject areas. The emphasis is on the need for higher education institutions to pay special attention in improving the quality of teaching at all levels of study. This should be a priority in the further implementation of the European standards and guidelines for quality assurance. (Leuven & Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué 2009).

In this context, special attention should be paid to the skills that need to be built in students, and which relate to the field of study, of the future professional activity, as well as transferable or general abilities, which pay special attention to the curriculum, and which are especially emphasized in the documents of the European Commission for Education, such as building arguments and solving problems, giving judgments and communication skills (Working on the European Dimension of Quality, 2002).

All this means stimulating pedagogical practical work, participating in various project activities, working in small groups or in pairs, keeping a diary for conducted activities and other forms of monitoring their own engagement and contribution. Hence, this approach will enable the student to be an active subject in the process of learning and teaching, that is, through his own engagement, taking responsibility and the opportunity to act in the wider environment, to create the image for himself and his own importance and role in the world in which he lives.

III. RESEARCHING DESIGN

The research carried out within these frameworks is dominated by the descriptive method. Surveys and scaling were used as research techniques. The subject of this research is the influence of the way the teaching is organized on the development of students' competences. For that purpose, we used two questionnaires-scalings: a questionnaire about the organization of teaching and a questionnaire about the evaluation of the quality of teaching.

Within the frames of this research, a dependent variable is the quality of teaching, while an independent variable is: the didactic-methodical way of organizing the teaching.

1. Sample survey

The sample of the research is random. The sample of respondents is comprised of a total of 78 students from the third and fourth year of study from Pedagogical Faculty at the University of Tetovo.

2. Hypotheses

H0: General hypothesis: The didactic-methodical way of organizing the higher education has a significant influence on the development of students' competences.

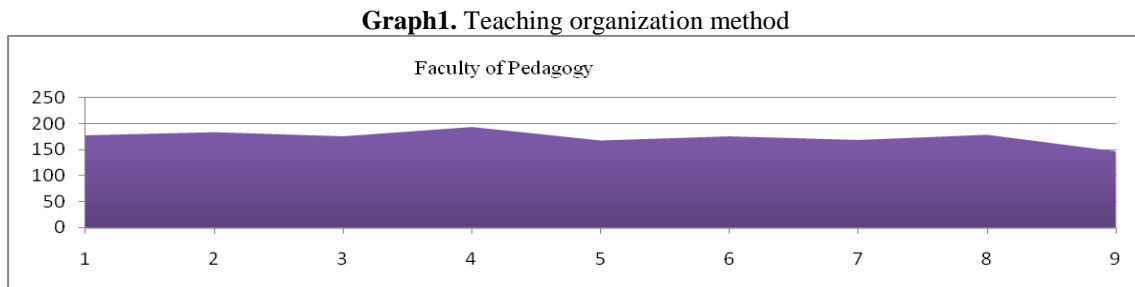
H1: It is assumed that students can clearly define the most significant aspects of the organization of higher education.

H2: It is assumed that students can evaluate the quality of teaching.

3. Analysis and interpretation of the results

It is known that perceiving the learning from students' view presents a challenge for all who participate in the organization and realization of higher education. Every aspect of the higher education is a subject to screening, evaluation, analysis in order to improve it. But the real challenge for teachers is the harmonization of teaching methods and strategies with the criteria for examining knowledge. In this way, the quality of student learning is enhanced.

The results obtained from the first hypothesis are presented in graph 1:



The students at the Faculty of Pedagogy see the fourth, second and eighth assertions, as the most significant aspects of the organization of the teaching distinguish: Teachers encourage students to ask questions and seek answers and explanations. Teachers provide clear explanations as to why certain tasks are being performed. Teachers value more when the essence is adopted and the important concepts are understood. The Students see the ninth and fifth assertions, as the least significant aspects of the organization of teaching: It is insisted on individual assessment of the students about the accuracy of the final solution of the problem. It encourages independence in finding possible solutions to the problems.

The obtained results confirm the first hypothesis and suggest that It the students still see the teacher as the focus of the organization of teaching, at the expense of their role in the process.

The results obtained according to the second sub-hypothesis: It is assumed that students can evaluate the quality of teaching, are shown in table 1 and graph 2.

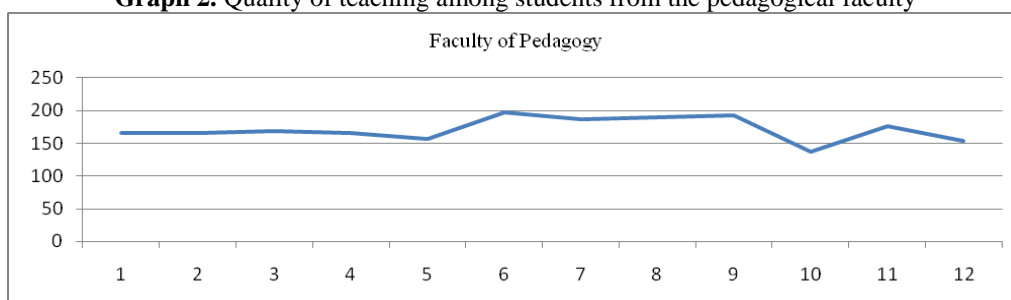
Table 1: Quality of teaching

Nr.	The representation of certain aspects of the teaching	Total score of the quality of teaching
		Faculty of Pedagogy
1.	Different strategies are applied in teaching and learning	166
2.	The contents of the subjects are modern and suit the needs of the labor market	166
3.	Teachers try to make the content they teach, interesting	168
4.	Teachers use many practical examples in their presentation and explanation	165
5.	Teachers motivate me to do my best and do my tasks the best that I can	157
6.	During lectures and exercises, students' ideas and opinions are accepted	197
7.	There are many opportunities for group and cooperative work among students	187
8.	Teachers tend to achieve quality communication with students	189
9.	Teachers pay attention to giving comments and feedback on the students' works	192
10.	Students are mostly passive listeners during lectures and exercises	137
11.	Recommended literature is appropriate for learning the material	176
12.	the center of the educational process is the student, not the teacher	153

The assessment of the quality of teaching by the students from the Faculty of Pedagogy contains questions in regard to the representation of certain aspects of the teaching. Students value the sixth, ninth and eighth assertions: during the lectures and exercises the opinions and ideas of the students are respected, the teachers pay attention to giving comments and feedback to the students' work, and also the teachers are trying to achieve quality communication with students. While the lowest and most valued are the tenth and twelfth

claims: students are mostly passive listeners during lectures and exercises, and at the center of the educational process is the student, not the teacher.

Graph 2. Quality of teaching among students from the pedagogical faculty



Students' responses confirm the second hypothesis and clearly indicate their expectations, which are raising the quality of teaching through its modernization and use of new methods, tools and strategies at work, respecting individuality, interests and opportunities of students. This attitude implies constant increase of the quality of education as well as creation of study programs in accordance with the actual needs of the society.

Graph3. Relationship between didactic-methodical organization and quality of teaching

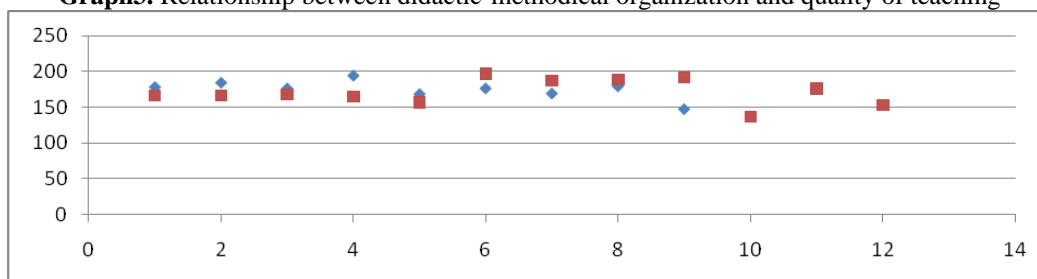


Table 2. An analysis of variance (ANOVA)

Faculty of Pedagogy	Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	sig
Didactic-methodical way of organization and quality of teaching	Between Groups	62.00	1.00	62.00	0.24	0.63	p>0.05
	Within Groups	4829.14	19.00	254.17			

Based on the analysis of variance, we established that there is a negative correlation between the didactic - methodical way of organizing and the quality of teaching ($F_{77,1} = 0.24$, $sig = 0.63$, $p > .05$), with which the hypothesis is rejected. The results obtained show that there is still a need to follow and apply the modern educational programs and curricula that are used at European universities and which will contribute to better quality of the higher education in our country.

IV. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Having in mind the fact that quality is best assessed on the basis of a product that arises as a result of a particular process (Garvin, 1984), this paper focuses on qualitative indicators. More specifically, students' attitudes towards didactic-methodological organization of teaching and assessment of its quality were taken into account.

Namely, the quality of the teaching process at the same time rests on the paradigm of focus on the student, which directly contributes to strengthening their competence, self-efficacy, self-regulation of learning, internal motivation achieving better academic achievements and a sense of satisfaction. In this regard, we can conclude that it is necessary:

- To define specific goals in regard to the development of the curriculum and to promote the teaching process that emphasizes the importance of the teaching mission of the institutions of higher education and the necessity of the current curriculum reform efforts to focus on the development and formulation of appropriate educational outputs.

- The forms, methods and teaching techniques are primarily instruments, means of work, and not just an achieving goal.
- Reflection on the success in the realization of classes based on students' reaction and personal observations.
- Learning directed towards the students that will enable new approaches in teaching, effective support and focus on students at all levels of study.

However, in such a complex situation and the interdependent relation of all factors, a series of relevant issues open, which illustrate the problem of the relationship of the curriculum in higher education, social needs, individual affinities and the global education policy.

In this context, the curriculum reforms will be key processes leading to a higher quality of education and flexible educational approaches.

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