

# OVERVIEW OF DIDACTIC METHODOLOGICAL ORGANIZATION OF UNIVERSITY TEACHING BY BOLOGNA CONCEPT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Nedim Čirić\*

University of Travnik – Faculty of education  
Travnik, Bosnia and Herzegovina

International Lifelong Education Center of Tuzla  
Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina

DOI: 10.7906/indecs.14.1.5  
Regular article

*Received:* 13 October 2015.  
*Accepted:* 21 January 2016.

## ABSTRACT

Reassessment of the existing didactic-methodological organization within the University lectures as well as the role of students and University lecturers is a result of the current process of higher education reforms. The advancement of pedagogical and didactic-methodological competences of university lecturers represents an imperative in reaching a high quality education. The results of this research may function as a starting point in the self-evaluation of University lecturers. The point of this work was to present didactic and methodical elements of contemporary university teaching, according to Bologna concept of higher education, and position of students. Taking into consideration the very definition and didactic methodological structure and legality of teaching, researches related to representation of individual didactic and methodical elements of contemporary university teaching are presented, which relate to forms of teaching, methods of teaching and application of teaching and technical aids. In the context of the current reform of the high education and considering the Bologna Declaration it could be concluded that contemporary university teaching is marked with cooperative interactive teaching in which the position of students and teachers is defined as partnership.

## KEY WORDS

higher education, university teaching, teaching methods, forms of teaching, teaching and technical aids

## CLASSIFICATION

JEL: F02

\*Corresponding author, *mp*: [nedimcivic@gmail.com](mailto:nedimcivic@gmail.com); +387 30 540 876;  
University of Travnik – Faculty of education, Aleja konzula br. 5,  
72 270 Travnik, Bosnia and Herzegovina

## INTRODUCTION

The integration of value patterns, stemming from the Bologna Declaration, involves a thorough process of reform of the traditional higher education. It implies that scientific work must be in the function of improving lives and ensuring its quality, and higher education in the function of expertise and competence. Božović [1; pp. 93-114] emphasizes that individuals, who are better included in the structure of the company, acquire the right position and thus complete their realisation. The outcomes of university educated individual should represent a starting point when it comes to comprehensive reform when it comes to increasing the quality of teaching. Reforms should contribute to the university autonomy that does not mean detachment from society and its flow, but greater independence and self-determination. Mikanović [2] points out that university autonomy means larger autonomy of students (academic freedom; scientific, educational and cultural objectives). The pursuit of autonomy of the university, thus of each and every student, represents a modern paradigm in university education. In this regard, Đukić [3; pp.135-145] points out that the full success of the reform of higher education can only be expected when organizational system (external) and the pedagogical and didactic (internal) components are combined. When we talk about the modern concept of university teaching and higher education, it most often means higher or university education which was created after the introduction and implementation of the Bologna Declaration in higher education system.

Franković et al. [4; p.1094] point out that higher education comprises three independent and interrelated degrees (cycles) of education. It provides acquisition-rounded and comprehensive knowledge for the duties assigned specific profession and provides the skills needed to continue their studies at a higher level under the conditions that are prescribed for it. Formally and legally, the process of transforming European universities started with the Bologna Declaration, by which the Bologna signatory countries pledged to harmonize their domestic higher education policies by 2010. However, the reform process and transformation of the internal and external sense is still ongoing. Matović and Bodoroški-Separiosu [5] point out that among the objectives of the Bologna Declaration are to achieve international competitiveness of European higher education system, and to ensure the mobility of students, thus to increase the quality of university teaching and higher education in general. Increasing the quality of higher education is an imperative of the modern learning society. The ultimate goal of higher education is to train individuals for more active contribution to their own and community development. Mikanović [2] points out that the pursuit of high-quality university education is linked with the need for innovations in university teaching. The goal of such innovations is to achieve higher learning outcomes, one of the key aspects of higher education. Innovations should be based on the new quality of education, look ahead to the study in the future, providing incentives for competitiveness, diversity, decentralization, flexibility and mobility of all stakeholders which opens a real opportunity to remove and reject misconceptions and confusions that are responsible for the ineffectiveness, inefficiency and uneconomic character of the existing higher education system [3; p. 136]. So, there is a need to deal with current higher education system primarily reconceptualised from *knowledge society* into *learning society*, which means that higher education must develop the competences of students to acquire knowledge, to discover, create, innovate, to produce and earn. The current social and scientific and technological moment demands innovative institutions of higher education, in which the students train for themselves and for their self-improvement.

Universities, or other higher education institutions, are most often associated with scientific researches and less with pedagogical teaching. Regarding the modern concept of university teaching, Barr and Tagg [6] point out the important principles of the paradigm of learning in

terms of mission or purpose, success criteria, the structure of teaching (teaching – learning), theories of teaching and learning, productivity (efficiency) and the role of actors and entities involved in teaching. Teaching, determined as a unity of educational influence, is conditioned by the factor relations, positions and roles. The university education is to be considered as a powerful system for developing new knowledge (knowledge), skills and competences of all its participants. Mikanović [2] points out that the key subjects of effective university teaching are faculty, staff (assistants) and students. In university teaching, it is not only the students who are the subjects for acquiring knowledge and developing competencies, but also the teachers and their associates. If someone is between these entities to develop partnerships and initiate emancipation, then he or she will follow the successful outcomes of the educational purposes of higher education. In this sense, the character of university teaching becomes progressiveness, evolutionary and collaborative interactive work, which in turn becomes a space for self-exploration.

Therefore, in addition to high-quality programs, there is a need for competent teachers, prepared to contribute to the university teaching with new and innovative approaches, procedures, methods, forms, models and systems. As such, university teachers become role models of professionalism, scientific research and educational activities that will successfully animate and motivate students, and make them interested for active participation, using various forms of teaching. The methodological element is organizational structure of university teaching. In this regard, the design, preparation and planning of teaching are defined as “the design, modelling and structuring of teaching with special emphasis on the spatial conditions, equipment, time, stakeholders, program contents, activities, objectives and tasks to be accomplished” [7]. For adequate didactic-methodological organization, the incorporated components of university teaching are the pedagogical and scientific researches.

The goals of this article are to present didactic and methodological elements of modern university education according to the Bologna concept of higher education, and to determine whether the modern university instruction has the feature of collaborative interactive classes in which the position of students and teachers is defined as a partner.

## **WORKING METHODS**

The study uses a descriptive analytical method. Basic search was conducted via Google Scholar search, electronic databases Hrcak, Blackwell Synergy, Dean and Master FILE Premier, review of articles published in printed editions of the journals *Didactic directions* and *Our School*, as well as the Proceedings of scientific conferences. Database search was conducted in May 2015 and was based on the following key words: Bologna system; University teaching; higher education; position of the students in the classroom; Methods of teaching; forms of teaching; competence of university teachers; higher education; university education; The Bologna system of education. Search was restricted to articles available online, but published in peer-reviewed journals. In total, the search resulted in identified 175 scientific articles in Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, English and German language. For the separation and classification of articles the procedure of content analysis was utilised. Criteria for classification were compatible with the research topics in published researches, review and original scientific articles. Finally, regarding alignment with the topic of didactic and methodical organization of university teaching, search ended with extracted 8 published articles and 2 master’s theses, namely “The didactic elements of modern university education” by N. Čirić [8], and “Student evaluation of teaching quality in the pedagogical-psychological group of subjects within the teaching programs of study by R. Nurikić, both prepared at the University of Tuzla” [9].

The content analysis included articles that meet the following criteria:

- a) articles published in the period from 01. 01. 2008 to 31. 12. 2014., and referring to didactic and methodological organization of university teaching and student placement,
- b) articles based exclusively on quantitative methods, and whose subjects were university teachers, staff (assistants and senior assistants) and students.

In addition, this study utilised 14 published articles that met the criteria of content, which is based solely on the concept of the Bologna Declaration and higher education, and not on the empirical research.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS**

Professional role of university teachers is of great importance. Todorović [10; p.290] points out that a university teachers kept all the *old* responsibilities and roles in which they were, and received a large number of new ones. In this sense, it is assumed that more methodical training of university teachers, could significantly lessen problems in the didactic and methodology organization, or at least contribute to a better quality of university teaching and simpler adjustment of the educational reform and didactic transformation. Previous studies of that subject are briefly reviewed in Table 1.

## **DISCUSSION**

For high-quality level of didactic and methodological organization of university teaching, the basic teaching skills are needed, which are part of the pedagogical and didactic-methodical competence of the modern university teachers. Babić-Kerkez [19] points out that the development of the competencies of university teachers should be in direct cause effect relationship to ensure the quality of teaching. According to Ciryacou [20], seven categories of basic teaching skills are: (i) planning and preparation, (ii) execution lesson, (iii) conduct and course of the lesson, (iv) the class atmosphere, (v) discipline, (vi) assessment of students' progress and (vii) review and evaluation of their work. Ljubetić and Kostović-Vranješ [21; pp.209-230] expect the professional knowledge from pedagogically competent teachers, as well as skills and abilities to utilise their pedagogical activities and characteristics of their personality, which explores the psychology of being the positive role model and authority to follow. Acquisition of pedagogical and didactic-methodical competences, achieved in high quality pedagogical education, is a continuous process of lifelong learning, with constant self-evaluation and self-critical assessment. According to Simmons [22] evaluation of the systematic collection of data on the activities, characteristics and outcomes of projects in order to make an assessment of the project, improves efficiency and making the decisions about future projects. In this sense, this research contributes to formulating the evaluation of university teaching, with the aim of improving its quality.

Reform of university education refers to the competence of university professors and researchers, who along with the required high-quality level of their scientific researchers must constantly work to improve the pedagogical and didactic-methodological quality. Čirić [16; pp.1001-1009] concluded that university teachers most commonly use the method for the oral presentation and the interview method. This implies that characteristic of a university education dynamic are its instructiveness and cooperativity. In relation to the communication and interaction aspect of teaching, and to emphasize results of modern didactic theoreticians Rainer Winkel, Wolfgang Schulz, Felix von Cube, Christina Möller and Wolfgang Klafki (according to [23]), we can conclude that in the practice of teaching there was a significant change in the student-teacher interaction. Several authors emphasise communication aspect and dynamism of modern university teaching, and emphasise the concept Bologna Declaration, e.g. [3; pp.135-145, 5, 10; pp.282-293, 19, 24, 25, 26; pp.350-357, 27].

**Table 1.** Systematic review of studies (continued on p.57).

Reference	Name of work	Criteria	N	Research results
[11; pp.287-295]	The project-correlation teaching at the teacher program	Teaching, students	39 students	Student Project-correlated accessed through the connection of content and diversity of the organization of teaching abandoning hour-relevant organization.
[12; pp.156-160]	Implications of the Bologna process: student's position in the educational process	The position of student, high education	152 students	Respect for the student as the subject of learning modes are seminars, consultations, exercises, discussions, having a positive effect on the reorganization of higher education.
[13; pp.97-105]	Active teaching strategies in higher education	Teacher, student, strategies, methods and practices of teaching	360 students	Dominant method of oral presentation or by the frequent use of discussion indicating the gradual reorganization of higher education.
[8]	The didactic elements of contemporary university education	University education, the Bologna system, forms of teaching	101 teacher and associate	Frontal form of teaching the most prevalent after the introduction of the Bologna system of education and teaching characterized as traditional and monotonous.
[14; pp.47-61]	Selection and use of teaching methods in the organisation and realisation of contemporary university classes	Modern university teaching, methods of teaching	101 teacher and associate	Method oral presentation dominant teaching method, and next to it and the conversation, which reflects the dynamism of the process of modern university teaching
[15; pp.187-199]	Competence of the European dimension in education: students' attitudes	Students, competence	139 students	After 139 students the importance of assessment of competencies by students, is the ability to work in teams with teachers and associates 1, knowledge of the work of teachers and other professional staff 12, and capability for innovation in the educational process of the 13 <sup>th</sup> .
[16; pp.1001-1009]	Forms, methods and techniques of evaluation, inspection evaluation and assessment of students' achievement in contemporary university teaching	Contemporary university education, the Bologna Process, evaluation	101 teacher and associate	The most dominant was written assessment through tests, quizzes, essays, etc., fewer teachers used verbal verification of knowledge, lack of time and too many students.
[17; pp.139-159]	Options evaluation of higher education	Higher education	37 students	Students actively participate in the evaluation, observations and suggestions. Students can encourage teachers to improve all phases of the teaching process.
[9]	Student evaluation of teaching quality in pedagogical-psychological group of subjects within the teaching programs of study at the University of Tuzla	Higher education, university education, the Bologna education system, the quality of teaching	225 students	Students negatively evaluate the quality of the planning and organization of university teaching, as well as the quality of communication and interaction between students and teachers.

**Table 1.** Systematic review of studies (continuation from p.56).

Reference	Name of work	Criteria	N	Research results
[18; pp.14-25]	Selection and use of teaching aids and technologies in contemporary University courses	Didactic media and teaching technology, teaching aids, university courses, high education	101 teacher and associate	Teachers combine all available teaching resources, but the most dominant auditory teaching aids in use in the modern university teaching.

## RESULTS

The methodological organization of modern university teaching reveals that the students engage better in the classroom through greater interaction and specific activities. That changes the position of students from being passive observers to being active participants. This means that a division of duties and responsibilities of all stakeholders continues. Overall, out of traditional framework emerges the more modern, partnership, cooperative and interactive teaching. Corresponding classes allow for building interpersonal skills, which are important for the development of social competence of both the individuals and the group. For the development of social skills in competence, Gardner [28] emphasizes cooperative learning, communication, ability to understand, the division of labour, the art of cooperation and group projects. The traditional concept of working in university teaching is changed, so students become active agents of the teaching process, developing their competences, responsibility and creativity, and develop a tendency to be more successful in the implementation of the planned tasks. According to Suzić [29], making a person competent for the XXI century includes the cognitive, emotional, social and labour actions, all necessary for young people to live freely. Given two typical orientations (inclusion and alienation) that we find in the teaching process as in higher education, and at lower levels of institutional education, the development of social competences is most effectively achieved through operations of the student collective, i.e. work in groups. In relation to the representation of teaching materials and technical equipment in the didactic and methodology of modern organization of university teaching, research results indicate that the most common approach is to combine all educational resources. This to a large extent leads to a reduction in the monotony of teaching practice, both for the students and the teachers. The sources from which to draw their teaching programs are diverse, and are in line with modern teaching technologies.

With regard to the substantive technical work conditions, most of the teachers are trying to follow world standards in the availability of content. The most dominant is the spoken word of teachers and students. In the pedagogical sense that is a very important fact as it, in addition to making possible proper treatment of risks provided by new technologies in terms of technical aids in teaching, makes possible the face-to-face communication, bringing about the exchange of values and skills necessary for student and teacher. This indicates how the student and teachers are much more important factors in such classes than in the *dry* courses and technical training aids, which minimises social interaction and communication aspects of teaching in the foreground. Classes with face-to-face communication provide fertile ground for the development of scientific research and obtaining of professional and other competencies throughout higher education. Ciryacou [20] points that students learn 10 % of what they read, 20 % of what they hear, 30 % of what they look, 50 % of what they hears and watch, 70 % of what they hear, see and say, and 90 % of what they hear, see, say and personally do. Still, one needs to search for new models of didactic and methodical organization of university teaching through researches and continual development of higher

education didactics. New scientific explanations of what is happening in the field of higher education and university teaching bring about new insights as well as new questions that are still open and unexplored. One of these reintroduced findings is that the university and higher education made up of people, not just buildings, new media, technology and the like. People who participate in the educational process in higher education institutions are (subjects of commitment), students, university professors and their associates. The material and technical conditions of work, which are the most insisted upon in the reform of higher education, are not a priority. With modest material and technical equipment, with good motivation for learning and adequate didactic and methodical organization of university teaching, one can accomplished the humanistic goals of quality of higher education, with a relaxed atmosphere in which students acquire knowledge to further create, produce and earn. People are creatures of learning, not only youth, but also adults, do not like to be on learning makes or that are taught in a way that takes into account their development needs, their individuality and their sub cultural identity. One of the questions that arose in research is what the level of the willingness is and the tolerance of students and teachers in accepting changes with respect to the traditional perception of higher education and ways of its organization.

If one asks a university teacher or a student whether to make changes in the organization of classes, they will easily enumerate a list of variables, perceived as non-effective for learning. However, in terms of the normative science of education, through self-evaluation processes have not yet experienced the claim that any of the actors of university teaching point out “I need a change!” In the reform process, which, among other things affected by the pedagogical and didactic – methodological training of university teachers, it should be noted that all pedagogical changes based solely on changes in people. With adequate pedagogical and adult education conceived projects, action research and pedagogical training concepts, problems didactic-methodological organization can be successfully resolved. The limiting factors in this research, but also generally in the field of higher education didactics and higher education is weak commitment to research and very little work in this area, both in domestic and in international publications. Questions that need to further investigate and problematize, concerning the segments that are part of the directly or indirectly investigated by this study apply to the following: Kolya basic guidelines for the structure of didactic and methodical micro organization university teaching? Is there a systemic organization of professional and pedagogical training of university teachers and staff, as well as when and how it is monitored and evaluated? Is there an internal (pedagogical-psychological) control of the teaching process in universities and who controls (such as regulated at the level of primary and secondary education)?

## **CONCLUSION**

High-quality level of education for students and their continuing professional development is the key tendency of every country in the upgrading of the education system. This implies a different organization of learning and change in the approach to teaching at all levels of education. With the introduction of reforms in higher education a number of changes in operating mode are made, such as access to study, the requirements that are placed in front of students and teachers, perception studies, the expected outcomes and desired competencies. Based on the aforementioned, it can be concluded that the modern university instruction has tendency to change its concept of standardization, apply modern pedagogical and didactic and methodological knowledge in order to meet the needs and expectations of higher education. As for the didactic-methodical elements of modern university education, it can be concluded that the modern university teaching methods are dominated by oral presentation with a dominant frontal form of teaching, which implies that the substantial changes in the methodical organization and methods of work in higher education did not take place, and that there is still a traditional approach in the implementation of programs, where the teacher’s

activity is the dominant one, which is not in line with the trends of the Bologna education. However, the fact that in the organization of teaching there is a high percentage of group forms of teaching and methods of conversation, it can be concluded that the modern university instruction has the feature of a collaborative interactive classes in which the position of students and teachers is defined as a partnership. When it comes to the use of teaching materials and technical tools, one concludes that teachers usually combine all available educational resources, which can be an indicator to improve the quality of teaching and reduce the monotony in the learning process. Given this background, the research results are an indicator for taking specific measures and procedures for practical action in order to raise the quality of educational activities and didactic-methodological organization of modern university education.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Božović, R.R.: *Socio-cultural activities of universities*. In Serbian. Sociološki pregled **1-2**, 93-114, 2001,
- [2] Mikanović, R.B.: *Humanistic development paradigm of university education*. In Bosnian. Faculty of Philosophy, Banja Luka, 2010,
- [3] Đukić, M.: *The new paradigm of university teaching as an expression of pedagogical higher education reform*. In Montenegrin. Sociološka luča **IV/1**, 135-145, 2010,
- [4] Franković, D., et al.: *Encyclopedic Dictionary of pedagogy*. In Croatian. Matica hrvatska, Zagreb, 1963,
- [5] Matović, N. and Bodroški-Spariosu, B.: *Bologna Process and Pedagogical Study Program Reform*. National Scientific Conference “Educator between the Theory and the Practice”. Philosophical Faculty – University of Beograd & Serbian Pedagogical Society, Beograd, 2013,
- [6] Barr, R.B. and Tagg, J.: *From Teaching to Learning*. In: DeZure, D., ed.. AAHE & Stylus Publishing LLC, Sterling, 2000,
- [7] Musić, H.: *Micro-organizations of teaching - determinant of the relationship between students and teachers*. In Bosnian. Off Set, Tuzla, 2009,
- [8] Čirić, N.: *The didactic elements of modern university teaching*. M.Sc. Thesis. In Bosnian. Faculty of Philosophy, Tuzla, 2013,
- [9] Nurikić, R.: *Student evaluation of teaching quality in the pedagogical-psychological group of subjects within the teaching programs of study at the University of Tuzla*. M.Sc. Thesis. In Bosnian. Faculty of Philosophy, Tuzla, 2014,
- [10] Todorović, K.: *The basic assumptions of effective teaching based on the principles of the Bologna Declaration*. In Serbian. Sociološka luča **IV/1**, 282-293, 2010,
- [11] Grahovac-Pražić, V. and Vrcić-Mataija, S.: *Project-correlation teaching at the teachers' college*. In Croatian. Metodika **9(17)**, 287-295, 2008,
- [12] Močinić, S.: *Implications of the Bologna process: student's position in the educational process*. In: *Proceedings of the International Conference on Comparative Education and Teacher Training*. Sofia, pp.156-160, 2008,
- [13] Močinić, S.: *Active teaching strategies in higher education*. Metodički obzori **7(2012)2(115)**, 97-105, 2012,
- [14] Čirić, N.: *Selection and use of teaching methods in the organisation and realisation of contemporary university classes*. Naša škola **LIX(239)**, 47-61, 2014,



- [15] Turk, M. and Ledić, J.: *Competence of the European dimension in education: student's attitudes*. In Croatian. *Pedagogijska istraživanja* **10**(2), 187-201, 2013,
- [16] Čirić, N.: *Forms, methods and techniques of evaluation, inspection, evaluation and assessment of students' achievement in contemporary university teaching*. In: *Proceedings of the 5<sup>th</sup> International Scientific-Professional Conference "Cultural Identity in Digital Age"*, Zenica, 1001-1009, 2014,
- [17] Bogнар, B. and Bungić, M.: *Evaluation in higher education*. In Croatian. *Život i škola* **LX**(31), 139-159, 2014,
- [18] Čirić, N.: *Selection and Use of Teaching Aids and Technologies in Contemporary University Courses*. *Metodički obzori* **9(2014)2**(20), 14-25. 2014,
- [19] Babić-Kerkez, S.: *Competencies of the higher education teachers*. In Serbian. In: *Proceedings of the 14<sup>th</sup> National Conference on High Education "Effects and Quality of Bologna Studies"*, Beograd, 2008,
- [20] Ciryacou, C.: *The basic teaching skills*. In Croatian. Eduka, Zagreb, 1994,
- [21] Ljubetić, M. and Kostović Vranješ, V.: *Pedagogical (in)competence of teachers*. In Croatian. *Odgovorne znanosti* **10**(1(15)), 209-230, 2008,
- [22] Simmons, B.: *Designing Evaluation for Education Projects. Environmental Education*. Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, 2004,
- [23] Gudjons, H., et al.: *Didactical theory*. In Croatian Eduka, Zagreb, 1994,
- [24] Avramović, Z.: *The potentials and limits of creativity from the standpoint of the Bologna Declaration*. In Serbian. *Zbornik* **8**, Vršac, 2002
- [25] Uzelac, M.: *University and European cultural imperialism, or "Tales from the Boulogne forest"*. In Serbian, *Zbornik* **8**, Vršac, 2002,
- [26] Mickajlova-Andrejeva, O.: *Work on the creation of the object-position of students in humanistic-didactic level*. In Serbian, *Pedagogija* **3**, 350-357, 2005,
- [27] Krulj, S. and Arsić, Z.: *Actual problems of modern education in higher education institutions*. In Serbian. In: *Proceedings of the 6<sup>th</sup> Symposium: The teacher in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, Aleksinac, 2011,
- [28] Gardner, H.: *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. Basic Books, New York, 1983,
- [29] Suzić, N.: *Pedagogy for the XXI century*. In Bosnian. TT-Centar, Banja Luka, 2005.