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Title: Wybrane state z didaktiki wysokej skoly - recenzja

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Book Review:

Ján Bajtoš, *Vybrané state z didaktiky Vysoke Školy. Učebný text kurzu vysokoškolskej pedagogiky*. Košice: Technická Univerzita v Košiciach, 2008, pp. 153

The book *Vybrané state z didaktiky Vysoke Školy. Učebný text kurzu vysokoškolskej pedagogiky* presents the contemporary view on the process of education performed at colleges and universities. In 10 chapters the author consistently verifies the assumption that learning is not an automatic consequence of the methodologically correct knowledge delivery exercised by the teacher. He advocates the idea of the involved/engaged education, i.e. active, stimulating the students' cognitive processes, taking advantage of the learners' resources and favouring activating teaching methods.

The first two chapters of the work are an interesting debate on the paradigms of the contemporary didactics. Thus, the reconstruction of two theoretical and methodological sources constituting that particular sub-discipline of pedagogy has been made in order to show the specifics of college and university education and the open problems of the so-called higher education didactics .

The third chapter entitled *Obsah Vzdelavania* deals with a deep analysis of the teaching-learning process. It is worth noting that a certain pattern of the traditional perception of the process has lost its validity or, in other words, got exhausted. However, the pattern should not be totally rejected but its certain elements ought to be implemented while setting educational standards or writing syllabuses.

The following chapters (4–8) are actually an exquisite 'precis' for a teacher who performs as an academic teacher or intends to take up such a profession. The essence of didactic rules/canons has been rendered in a synthesised, simple and comprehensible way. The rules have been explained thoroughly and the teacher's behaviour/acting has been referred to as the guarantee of maintaining the rules. Particular emphasis has been put on the influence of the atmosphere

of the learning situations created by the teacher on the students' knowledge perception level and its applicability, as well as on the degree of the opinions and beliefs independence (chapter 4). The classifications and typologies of the subject methodology widely functioning in the literature of the faculty have been presented in a way that shows their advantages and limitations (chapter 5). The organisational academic educational forms have been described in a very accessible mode. The most frequently used forms while working with students, such as lectures, classes, seminars, projects and trips and their aims, functions and efficiency factors have been broadly analysed. The necessity of applying different methods in the educational process has been stressed as well as the need for being/making a creative teacher (chapter 6). Both, the optimal time and space management in the educational process and the usage of teaching aids have been presented in detail (chapter 7). A considerable stress has been put on the fact that supervising and assessing is an integral part of the didactic process which should be carefully planned and realised by means of adequate tools. The tests quoted in the text exemplify the principles underlying the tests construction, assessment criteria and teaching results interpretation (chapter 8).

The last two chapters (9&10) are devoted to the question of personality of the academic teacher and the student as the subject of cognitive activity.

As the author himself says: „ak má vysokoškolský učiteľ efektívne splniť svoje úlohy, t.j.vzdelávať,vychovávať a rozvíjať osobnosti študentov, musí dôkladne ovládať svoj odbor, mať dobrú pedagogickú prípravu a vysokú všeobecnú kultúru” (p.135). Therefore, according to the author, to perform the basic functions of an academic teacher it is not sufficient to be well-prepared substantially and possess a wide knowledge of the subject; it requires not only versatile pedagogical competence but also immense culture and tact. Such a perception of an academic teacher defines the range of capabilities and responsibilities. It also allows expecting from the teacher to treat students as subjects (not objects) as well as to be the initiator of the intellectual dialogue, mentor and supervisor.

The book, as the author emphasises in the introduction, does not aspire to be a didactic manual for higher education teachers, but it aims at showing the basic information referring to the specifics and problems of teaching at colleges and universities, it is meant to be just a set of instructions for those preparing for the role of an academic teacher (p.5).

In my opinion the publication lives up to the tasks put forward. Definitely, its undeniable merit is the conciseness and cohesion of the message, transparent content and matching examples which “teach” how to put theory into practice. Each chapter contains a short conclusion and some questions directed to the reader.

This technique presumably catalyses the acquisition of the presented material and stimulates forming one's own opinions and judgement.

Therefore, I consider this book to be worth recommending not only to people who are preparing to take on the role of an academic teacher, but also to those, who are just taking their first steps in the profession.