

Review

Strakova, Z. (Ed.). *How to Teach in Higher Education: Selected Chapters*.

Prešov : 2017. 172 p. ISBN 978-80-555-1655-4. Available at:

(<http://www.pulib.sk/web/kniznica/elpub/dokument/Strakova2>).

Teaching at a university level is an integral part of the educational system in Slovakia. Together with elementary school and secondary school teaching it creates a complex structure in a broad field as schooling is. The online textbook under the title: *How to Teach in Higher Education: Selected Chapters (2016)* by a collective of seven authors is a publication that has at its scope a cross section of themes that play a crucial role in higher education teaching. As the editor states the selected chapters of various areas provide the reader with the knowledge and experience that is beneficial for doctoral students as well as for new teachers in tertiary education.

As for the structure of the textbook it consists of eight chapters that discuss a selected topic and these further divide into subchapters with specific scope. The book altogether covers 172 pages. Each chapter finishes with a conclusion and questions that assist the reader to review important facts.

The beginning of the book is focused on the broader context of teaching in higher education. The first chapter is oriented toward the main components within education – the teacher and the learner and it also specifies the approaches applied at university level. The author states here a useful description regarding a teacher's beliefs, styles and roles which affect his/her performance and so finally affect the teaching process. The learner is depicted as a "*powerful contributor to the learning process*" altogether with his/her motivation, attitudes, self-esteem, learning styles and strategies. These two components have their own specificities and therefore it is necessary to be aware of them when being involved in education. The last subchapter pays more attention to ways of approaching learning and gives readers references to assist in understanding the process of learning at tertiary level and hence a sense of the goals of education at this stage.

Chapter number two is based on the modes that are applied at tertiary level of education. In this regard the chapter consists of sections that discuss two main forms, lecture and seminar. The author depicts the essence of a lecture and explores the problems connected to this format of teaching. As emphasized within the text the maintenance of student interest is important; therefore, the planning of the whole lesson is crucial. The textbook gives some useful hints about how to structure a lecture and keep listeners involved. The second subchapters' focus lies in the definition of a seminar class in which the teacher's job is defined as the requirement to "*facilitate a process of learning, not lecture on content.*" The objectives of teaching and learning outcomes are clearly specified plus the author

stresses the importance of collaborative work among students. Cooperation is further discussed in suggestions for practice that assist the reader to better understand what is needed during seminars in order to have a productive learning environment. This section ends with tips to overcome a selection of typical problems that appear in class.

Textbook content continues with the third chapter where the spotlight is on the use of technologies in higher education, mainly for the presentation of ideas. The first section deals with positives and negatives when using technologies for classes. The following subchapter provides the reader with various forms of usage of technologies implemented in lectures and seminars. Tools such as the interactive whiteboard, video materials, the Internet, polls and surveys, audience response system are included. The author describes each of them and offers many tips and links to specific activities to be used at the tertiary level of education. In the last part of this chapter the steps for effective presentations are closely depicted as the ability to present and speak one's own ideas in front of an audience which is a crucial feature at universities. Steps such as preparation, goal, structure and suitable tools for a presentation are further discussed.

The fourth chapter of the textbook discusses the placement of e-learning within higher education. The introduction to this topic provides various opinions about what e-learning is. Participants in this process and the virtual learning environment are briefly described. The virtual learning environment section guides the reader through the forms of learner interaction and provides some examples of useful tools, tips and activities that support learner cooperation. The theoretical background includes the model of teaching and learning online through online networking. The author mentions tools such as threaded discussions, wiki, use of emoticons, Hot Potatoes activity as well as some tips for e-mail management, online discussions and chat management. The last feature that is reviewed within this chapter is the design of tasks in e-learning where the emphasis is placed on motivation and involvement.

Another component that is analysed in the fifth chapter is the topic of teaching materials. Authors of this chapter give a clear definition of what the main components of a good university textbook should include and what needs to be provided for the learner. In relation to this the textbooks at tertiary level have undergone a huge shift from the past as nowadays teaching and learning takes place in a multimedia environment. Three main types of available textbooks are defined. In the next section the reader can find a synthesis of components and qualities of university textbooks. Here is mentioned the structure of a textbook as well as the importance of readability and comprehensibility. The last part of this chapter depicts the process of textbook creation where the preparation, realization and closing phases are briefly mentioned together with the process for evaluating the quality of textbooks in higher education.

The learner's autonomy in higher education is the main scope of the sixth chapter. At universities the development of the learner's autonomy is at its core as emphasized by the author. In the theoretical background section, information is linked to the history, definition, process and components of this autonomy. The roles of the teacher and the learner where the autonomy of a student is not dependent on a teacher's redundancy is presented

in the text. It is about the change of role where the educator transfers from being the source of information to become the counsellor and manager of the study material. The following section of the chapter specifies the design of a course that is based on learner autonomy. The author defines the difference between independent learning and classroom learning. Classroom learning is further elaborated with strategies, principles, teaching styles and frameworks for the support of the learner's autonomy within his/her university level course.

Chapter number seven deals with assessment at universities which is a crucial feature of education. In regard to this the author of the chapter defines it as a process of monitoring student progress and includes information about the system and principles of the assessment. One section is devoted to examinations and their forms both oral and written. The next section provides clear distinction between formative and summative assessment that are applied among university students together with the importance of giving feedback for improvement of learners. The last part of this chapter provides the reader with a guide for designing a course which will reach the planned learning outcomes and will be able to assess them appropriately.

The last chapter of this textbook includes academic research that is carried out at the tertiary level of education as it is an inseparable part of it. Authors open this chapter with their interpretation of what the objectives of research are and what types are the most typical. The following section is devoted to the well elaborated academic research procedures for the bachelor, diploma and dissertation theses. Accompanying tables clarify the relevance of individual steps. The last two sections of this chapter deal with types of research papers each with a brief description and the language of scholarly articles is set forth.

The present textbook is a valuable resource for all new teachers, lecturers in higher education as well as for novice researchers whose aim is to better understand the necessary fundamentals of a university education. This publication is also strongly recommended for doctoral students who are seeking resources for their professional development as solid foundations in the understanding of both theoretical and practical teaching practice at university level are present. As well as tackling individual questions it supports thinking about selected topics. Individual chapters provide readers with many useful hints and sources for immediate and practical use.

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