UNIVERSITY LECTURERS´ AND TEACHERS´ COMPETENCIES

Sándor Albert[1]

Abstract – The higher education in Slovakia has gone through changes in the past twenty years. The biggest problem is the under financing of the higher education. The number of students in higher education has increased a lot between 1991 and 2008. Together with the growing number of students we had to increase the number of lecturers. The higher education institutions fill in the positions with elementary and high school teachers and the teachers with lower academic level fill in tasks as professors. A good teacher should have the following competencies: psychodidactic, communicative, diagnostically, organizational and managerial, advisory self-evaluation. The Department of Education of the J. Selye University in Komarno is currently working on an inside continuing education system especially designed for lecturers that do not have a teacher´ certificate. After the evaluation of this experiment, we will prepare the final model of this further education.

Index Terms – continuing education, higher education, teachers certification, teacher´ s competencies

In parallel with the social and economical changes, the higher education in Slovakia has also gone through enormous changes in the past twenty years.

The biggest problem as usual is the underfinancing of the higher education. In Slovakia only 0.1% of the GDP is spent on higher education, which is enough for survival, but is not possible to make some improvements as well.

There is a similar situation in the field of researches. While in OECD countries they spend
2 – 3% of the GDP from the general budget on research, in Slovakia this amount is at around 0.51% (Figure 1).

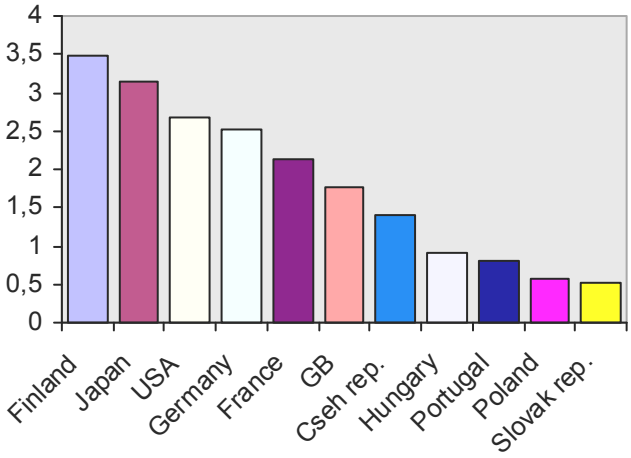

Figure 1. Money spent on research in OECD countries

Another problem is that the number of students in higher education has increased a lot between 1991 and 2008. There have been 25 new institutions established and the number of students has grown 4 times (Figure 2).

[1] J. Selye University, Slovak Republic

Number of students

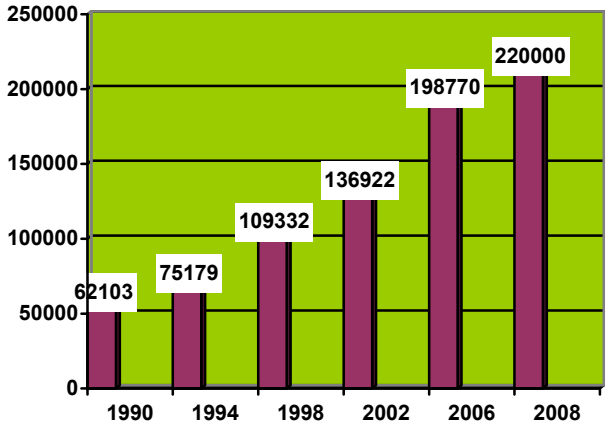

Figure 2. Growth in number of students between 1999 and 2008.

Nowadays in Slovakia with the population of 5 million there are 33 institutions providing higher education. Out of these there are 19 public, 10 private and 3 state institutions.

Together with the growing number of students we had to increase the number of lecturers as well. This caused and is still causing a huge problem. The higher education institutions therefore in many cases fill in these positions with elementary and high school teachers and the teachers with lower academic level fill in tasks as professors. The quality of education and the research therefore is not positively affected.

It is also interesting to mention that in colleges and universities it is possible to teach without pedagogical qualifications.

Engineers, doctors, lawyers, priests can lecture in Slovakian colleges, but also in all colleges around the world and universities without having formal pedagogical – psychological education. The truth is that most of them are highly qualified in their field. The question is whether this is enough.

It is well known that the student usually forgets what he was taught in school, but does not forget the way he was taught.

Researches also show that the teacher's pedagogical abilities affect the students´ success more than his professional knowledge.

Therefore, there should be paid more attention towards the pedagogical, psychological and methodological training when preparing teachers.

We suppose that the teachers´ training institutes do their job and raise good teachers. What about the active lecturers and instructors that do not have formal pedagogical training (engineers, doctors...)?

More than likely their training will be the task of the institutes for further education.

In Slovakia the elementary and high school teachers´ further education is provided by the state institutions.

On the other hand no one is providing further education for college and university lecturers.

Most of the professionals in the field of pedagogy agree that a good teacher should have the following competencies:

- **psycho-didactic** (creating positive environment for learning, motivating and involving students, developing and directing students´ self-learning, choosing the most effective teaching methods and forms and teaching materials, etc.)

- **communicative** (the ability to communicate effectively with students, colleagues, parents, etc.)

- **diagnostically** (finding students´ problems, how they think and feel,

how they behave and why, fairly evaluating students´ performance, etc.)

- **organizational and managerial** (to create an effective teaching process, etc.)

- **advisory** (to give advice to students for solving problems)

- **self-evaluation** (to evaluate his / her own teaching process)

The Department of Education of the J. Selye University University in Komarno is currently working on an inside continuing education system especially designed for lecturers that do not have a teacher´ certificate. This would allow them to complete their education.

The planned course will be 200 hours long and will offer the following:

- fundamentals of pedagogy,
- fundamentals of psychology,
- theory of teaching,
- technology of education
- rhetorical and communication training
- school management
- quality management,
- preparation of teaching materials.

The course will be offered in 4 one week long blocks.

The form of evaluation in the course will be the following:

- Participants will have to attend a complex written exam from the theory of teaching and quality management.
- They will attend a complex oral exam in psychology, rhetoric's and communication.

Students will also have to submit a written project in the following subjects:

a.) Specific goals in one specific subject.
b.) Written preparation for one lesson.
c.) Planning and creating one summary test.
d.) Self-evaluation of his / her own department.

After the evaluation of this experiment, we will prepare the final written model of this further education.

The Department of Education of the J. Selye University in Komarno is planning to make the above mentioned course mandatory for the teachers and lecturers in order for them to keep their part- or full-time positions as educators.