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TRANSITIONAL SPACES OF LEARNING IN HE.

The Polish context of PRILHE project research

I. The context of cultural and economical transitions in HE

The thesis which we want to present concerns not only diagnosis and the description of transitional spaces in higher education, but also their co-appearance and dependence. Three spheres of transition in the Polish higher education can be distinguished: the most general connected with social and economic transition; the second one connected with the institutions of higher education and the last one connected with learning of individuals in these institutions. These levels can be identified as makro, meso and micro − this is how Rennie Johnston and Barbara Merrill did it − the editors of a handbook written under the project Sokrates Grundtvig *Learning In Higher Education: Improving Practice for Non-traditional Students*.

In the Polish context the widest transitional space are the events to which we refer in most studies regarding the changes in Poland, i.e. years 1980 and 1989. In the analyses of different phenomena we shoud not to become "detached" from these events. We think that these significant social events have had crucial impact also on institutions of higher education, which are the element of wider social system as well as on functioning of an individual in educational situations. However, the changes and their effects which took place in 1980 and after 1989 differ in principle from one another, although the same social forces took part in them.

Simplifying, there can be indicated two crucial features of the transition in 1980: using the strategy which consisted in transforming the society (and not in taking over the power) and also introducing the ethical dimension in public and political activity (Koczanowicz 2005, p. 123 − 124). Whereas the transition of year 1989 concerned mainly the transformation of political system and the economic ones. There can be risked a statement that the effects of these decisive years were revealed in two different social orders: culture and economy. The effects of transformations of year 1980 are visible in the sphere of values (individual and socially shared) and cultural models based on coooperation and trust to others, on the category

and hierarchy of social actors. Whereas the effects of changes of year 1989 are more visible in the sphere of everyday life practice, both in the social and individual dimension. Economic transformations connected with such categories as ownership, work, financial resources, etc. caused new divisions in the society which resulted from „economic" value of an individual or a group and not from their cultural belonging. Many researchers of modern Polish reality state that the achievements and effects of the first turn (1980) are shaded (often replaced) by the effects of the second one (1989).

In our considerations we will restrict ourselves exclusively to the nearest and local perspective. We are not going to analyse significant traditions of academy in the perspective of European science, which are common for universities both in Poland and in Europe and they create their cultural context. Similarly Polish problems are shared by European Academies. However the changes in Polish higher education took place in a very short period of time (Malewski 2000). The index of these transformations is e.g. the number of higher schools: up to 1990 in Poland there were 126 higher schools – exclusively public ones. In year 2004 there are already 427 higher schools, including 301 non-public (owned by associations, foundations, enterprises and private owners).

The transformation in 1980 kept high position of higher schools and university professors in the ranking of social status and trust. It was believed that the university knowledge as well as the target and subject of economic activity of an institution of higher education is an autotelic value aiming at freedom and discovering the truth and taking up tasks of emancipating character (Malewski 1999). This type of a myth was sustained also by organisation and policy of higher education. It is worth emphasising that higher education up to 1989 was of selective character. The limited number of higher education institutions, the number of students and recruitment rules created numerous barriers in the access to higher education. Despite the fact that communistic authorities used the idea of spreading the access to people for working and pheasant classes (so-called preferential points for people from working and pheasant classes), it was done mainly with propaganda purposes, because the number of students from these areas did not change. On the other hand this exclusivity was one of the factors ensuring high social status (prestige and respect) to both institutions of higher education, academic teachers as well as to graduates.

After year 1990 higher education in Poland starts its „adventure" with free educational market. The effects are very diverse. The appearing non-public institutions of higher education must compete with public ones and „inscribe" in the existing academic myth or must create a new image of institution of higher education in the new conditions of political

and economic transformation. The educational boom which took place in the second half of the 1990's (the increase in the students' number - in 1990: 500.000, in 2005 about 2.000.000), paradoxically the problems on the job market (the necessity of training and improvement) and the possibility of enriching the educational offer by the institutions caused the increase in the importance of higher education, but more frequently in the instrumental sense and not in the autotelic one. The work (future, present, lost) became very often the main factor and criterion of choosing by an individual educational activity in higher education. However, making higher education widespread became a fact.

We are not touching at the beginning the issues which, we think, have an absolutely crucial importance for the processes of learning of individuals in the institutions of higher education: how pedagogy of institution has changed, how the problems connected with academic teachers have been solved, in which direction develop the institutions of higher education, etc. We wish to concentrate on the micro dimension: on learning of students in the institutions of higher education. The latter experience the period of instability , searching self-identification in the overlapping cultural and economic orders, in which they have to function. Institutions of higher education – so far solid, stable and sustaining historical and cultural continuity – become transitional space.

The participation in the Sokrates Grundtvig project enabled us to get acquainted with the third (or first) dimension of transitional space: learning of students (non-traditional students). In the last part of the study the category of the motivation connected with learning will be the basis for preliminary typology of non-traditional students. PRILHE (Promoting Reflective Independent Learning in Higer Education) is a research and development project aimed at improving and expanding practice and policy of independent reflective learning in higher education, funding by Socrates - Grundtvig. It is based on the results of the previous LIHE project (Learning in Higher Education). The project involves seven countries: The UK, Germany, Poland, Sweden, Spain, Finland and Portugal. The key objectives are to identify the learning processes which enable non- traditional adult students in higher education becoming a reflective independent learner through examining study skills, self management, learning to learn, analysing learning and teaching styles.The project is focused on non- traditional undergraduate adult students, that is why one of the most important aim is identyfing and examining the relation between learning from everyday life experience and learning in higher education. Through our research we belive we can improve and empower this relation and all its benefits both for adult students and lecturers.

II. Has the learning process been a transitional space? The early analysis of the Polish students questionnaires data.

According to the collaborative literature review the PRILHE project team has distinguished eight categories of learning, which were reflected in adequate fields in student's questionnaire. "Role of work / life experience in the learning process" covers the ideas about the potential of life and work experience, crucial in case of non – traditional students and adults education in general. "Individual organization of learning" concerns the preferable way of learning situated in the space between individual and more formal external frame of learning. "Reflection of contents" shows the preference in area of learning from one or many perspective and student's view on the teacher's preferences. "Framing the learning process" presents learning in terms of contextualization, shows to what extend is learning influenced by other sphere of learner's life or specific situations. "Dialogue in learning process" concerns the meaning of learning in groups, by dialogue in contrast with some potential preferences for individual learning. "Learning motivation" deals with question of wide understanding term of motivation in learning. "Learning approach" concerns personal way of learning and perceiving the whole process. "Instructions and spaces for individual organization" concerns preferable learning conditions.

1. Roles of work / life experience in the learning process[1]

The majority of the respondents (2/3 of the respondents) perceive work/life experience as a supportive force in relation to their education and disagree with the statement that it does not help in their approaches to learning. They often state that their friends' experience can be used as a way to understand or save the new problems they face either in private or in professional life. There are twice more respondents, who claim that teachers value their experience, than those who are not sure about that. But this opinion is followed by 1/3 of the respondents, who strongly expresses that they "do not know". A possible explanation for this way of answering may results from the fact that teachers more declare their interest in students' professional experiences than consider it in practice. Students often stress in interviews that the teachers have not known their professional background, they do not ask much about the work experience so the result is, they can neither value nor ignore the potential of the knowledge and abilities as well as skills which have been acquired by non- traditional students so far.

Teachers do not know anything about us. We do not know if they are interested in any of our

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[1]   See the pdf appendix for all the diagrams

features', talents, skills.

2. Individual organization of your learning

Most of the respondents claim that they have not changed their approach to learning since they had graduated from their last schools started to study and now that they have clear idea how to learn. In relation to lecturers the significant majority points out that teachers are not interested in their way of learning and they did not take account of this, but in the same question almost ¼ respondents said that they do not know if lecturers care about it. Almost as many cannot tell what are lecturers expectations, but more than a half does not have a problem with this issue and find it clear. A very high percentage answers „ I don't know" may suggest some communication distortion between students and teachers. If we take a look at some student's comments we can see that they find teacher more focused on the results of learning than on the process:

We think lecturers are more interested in the results of learning, but they do not care about the way we learn.

During a part time study our time is limited, so everyone sticks to his/her owns way of learning, there is no time to try something new.

While study, student needs to learn the way he/she find more convenient, cause his/her whole rhythm of life is changing, not like in high school, where the routines are more stable and learning is your main duty. While study one can not just get the part of material „ready to learn", but needs to search in books, libraries, talks to the representatives of the institutions. Only lecturers and subjects have changed, but learning is still about swotting

Even if students claim that „learning in high school and learning in HE are two completely different issues" and they realize changes in a way of learning, they still recall all known techniques of learning, mostly identified with memorizing and reproduction. Changes, if perceived, concern mostly new ways of getting sources of learning than learning in itself; students are seeing themselves as *more operative, more resourceful and self reliant when it comes about getting learning materials*. They often emphasis the relation between adulthood and being „trained to learn" in previous education. Such attitude may suggest that although they have heard a lot about active methods of learning, they do not use them in their individual learning. It may also proofs that active methods which are more time consuming, does not seem to be useful for them. They choose well known, trained by themselves way of

learning – memorizing, cause that is the way lecturers check their knowledge.

3. Reflection of contents

Almost everybody agrees that exchanging different points of view, looking from different perspectives is the crucial way in acquiring their knowledge. But when they come to state the opinion if the teachers want the students to reproduce what they are taught – about 2/3 of the students; claim that reproducing is the best way of presenting their knowledge. The opposite group, which is convinced that they are expected not to reproduce is the minority of the respondents and even less do not know if the teachers want them or not to reproduce the knowledge. Analyzing the next question (Q 40 – Lecturers encourage critical thinking) we get some common points in Students answers: almost half of the respondents is sure, that critical thinking is required by the teachers but 1/4 is sure that not at all. The number of those who do not know if they should be more independent in thinking or not, increases in comparison to Q 34 (Lectures expect me to reproduce what I am thought) .

Half of the respondents like engaging in critical discussions - which probably are the same students who are also sure that they are not expected to reproduce what they are thought. Quite a great number of the students does not like engaging in critical discussions. In interviews appear their awareness of being critical. They claim that the teachers are those *who make the rules.* There has been still the number of teachers who neither encourage for critical discussions nor let them go. The students say, now they spot the tension between two kinds of methods suggested by the teachers – those traditional ones and those modern and encouraging for active, critical thinking. Students voices and teachers way of working seems to be a reflection on each other. There are two main streams of students who state that there are two main streams of teachers. The students who are convinced of reproducing the 'knowledge' reflect the teachers working with very traditional and hierarchical ways. On the other hand the students who believe in expecting them critical thinking reflect the teachers who are personally more independent and are able to create the milieu fo supporting students in critical thinking.

4. Framing the learning process

Significant majority states the opinion, that their personal, social, work background plays very important role in their learning. They point the role of emotions and in the interviews they add – that the better experience of life they get the learning is easier. On the other hand they stress the division between the 'real life' and ' the school context'. They say that at school they should be more distanced toward different emotions they meet in their life. Most of the students is absolutely sure that their previous experience does not disturb their acquiring new

knowledge. But in the interviews they say that 'new knowledge' needs new consciousness and that is not easy to change rapidly their believes. They also point that the safer they feel in the situation of learning the better results they have got. It is suggested that the context of learning is not more important than the prior life experience but it gives the idea that they realize very well the role and the influence of social, emotional, cultural factors on their process of learning.

5. Dialogue in the learning process

Significant majority (almost every respondent) prefers working in group and 2/3 agree that their peers are useful to their learning, but not so many thinks that they learn best trough interaction with others. In polish context there is also a strong group of respondents who prefer to learn on their own – it is also about 2/3. If similar percentage points out that they prefer to work in group one may wonder how to interpret this? Perhaps, working in group means to them working during the classes and than they prefer it, but when it comes to prepare to exams they find individual learning more efficient. But still, there is an increasing need for dialogical, cooperative learning based on interaction in HE. In interviews students stress that they remember better when they interact with others and while discussions, they also perceive examples as an factor which make remembering easier, they have a chance to see the problem from the different perspectives. But they also add that *not for everybody work in groups means learning. Sometimes it is better to learn on your own, cause it let you to focus*. Many persons emphasize the value of the age diversity while working in group – it is not a barrier, but *it opens new possibilities; one can use more comparisons and relations*.

6. Learning motivation

Almost half of the students confess they do not know why they study these and those parts of the material. Those students are mostly very instrumental and they come for practical/instrumental solutions. If they cannot see the links between their practice they are rather not sure why they study those subject. Most of the respondents study under the external pressure of having the diploma. They are motivated by the professional carrier, labour market, social position etc. Only 1/10 are strongly opposed. In interviews they claim that they are motivated by their personal *need of developing different thinking skills, studding for better understanding the world.* Their motivation is the internal one. That group is in a minority but among those students there is the variety of individual reasons why they have taken up studying. Almost everybody are convinced that they are able to organize their process of learning by themselves. The question is: what do they understand by the notion learning?. Unfortunately it is explained by them as learning by heart and reproducing the

ready knowledge . The same conclusion comes from the earlier questions about individual organization of learning. This factor seems to be crucial to understand the polish context of learning in HE, that is way we will focuse on it in a final part.

7. Learning approach

Most of the respondents claim that they can handle learning and find it quite easy, but percentage of those who admit they have problems with learning still significant. So one can say that difficulties in adult student learning are not symptomatic, simple result of age or long break in learning's cycle. Our research confirms thesis about adults pragmatic approach to learning- over 180 persons think education should have some practical outcomes and over 160 that they are experimental learners. Those who declare they are cautious when they begin something new and those who denies are quite equal according to our results, but about 20 persons can not answer this question – maybe the way they learn is rather mechanical and the level of reflection on their learning is quite low? The same amount of respondents did not answer if they learn for the sake of learning itself – explanation may be the same as above.

More than a half of respondents claim that for them learning is a value in itself, more than 1/4 have some other reasons to study which may be relate to the high percentage of persons pointing that they learn for a promotion. In interview students explain that they do not value promotion in itself, but they treat it as a way to improve the quality of life, changes, economical development, spending more time with family or for hobbies. Still, market seems to be crucial in polish context.Some students see the need for learning in itself, but rather in field of their own interests than in relation to specific courses in HE.

8. Instructions and space for individual organization

Need for support in learning is declared by almost the same percentage as respondents who does not need it, but still there is a significant amount unable to define their own needs. Most of the students perceived strict and rigid instruction as a disturbance of learning, but for ¼ it is not a problem, which means they can handle such obstacles and fight them, perhaps thanks to their motivation or individual attitude. Just like in previous question there is a balance between those who find rigid instruction disturbing and those who does not. A little bit less than a half need clear instructions to learn, but more respondents can learn without them. As many as 160 students declares that they learn best when they can organize learning on their own, but it does not have to mean they question or reject the institution, it concerns rather learning as a preparing for classes or exams, learning as a completing the tasks given by the teachers. As we can see in students interview – they do not feel any individual support from

the teacher:

it is more about the relation between teacher and the group.

There is a stable scheme – teacher shows what to learn and at the end there is an exam or work to do

Not every lecturer gives a support – some of them just do their job

Until now I have not experienced lecturer's support - everybody knows what he/she comes for, knows his/her tasks

Lecturers know how to raise an interests, to guide our way of thinking

For the lecturers student's age is significant – younger are discriminate against the older, it is easier for older to pass the exams.

III. Motivation (?) as a key transitional category in the Polish context

Speaking about students' process of learning spotted in contemporary HE institutions it is essential to look a bit backward and compare the main features of non-traditional HE students before and after the process of transformation which has started in Poland in1989. Since the year 1989 a new quality of non-traditional students has existed which in turn has influenced both the institutional and the personal changes. The latter are mostly recognized inside the current 'structure' of students' groups in comparison with their previous content/structure and amount[2].

The former students' groups were divided into two main streams - 'the day-time A- level young and single traditional students' followed by 'the evening-classes non-traditional adults burden with the family life'. The above division presents a piece of former cultural and social context/background in which the HE used to be created. The former government expectations toward the role of HE institution were simple. The first political aim was changing the (hidden) social status from lower social position to higher professional position[3]. The second was to fulfill the country labour market according to the inner economical needs (Malewski, 1992, p.18).

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[2] But there was not much interest in entering the HE. Comparing the number of students in Poland there has been spotted the huge difference: in 1990/91 thre were 403,8 thousand of students while in 2001/2 there wer 15.84,8 and in 2004/5 the number increased to 19.17,3 (www.studentsnews.pl)

[3] Under the cover of the democratic rules, there had not existed any levels of social status apart from either working or peasant class. In fact the lower social origins the student had had the more additional points he could have scored as a candidate for the university (apart from the marks of his entrance tests)

Up to seventies both of the goals mentioned above were mainly directed to the young generation, who were perceived as bright, smart and privileged candidates for taking up universities. Youngsters were motivated strong enough that in 1977 year graduating from the HE institution was at the top of the people's life aims (ibidem, p.19). At the same time non-traditional students were treated as a bit worse group of students who were not either smart or motivated enough (if they had not studied when they were young).

The presented social context created the milieu in which the adult student was treated as a victim of external pressure. In social consciousness appeared a thought that HE activity cannot have been a personal need but it must have been the obligation for rising up qualification (Taylor, Herzberg, Alderfer, Mc Gregor etc.). Since then HE systematically was loosing its own value (Malewski, 1992, s.19)[4] which was fallowed by dramatically decreasing number of non-traditional students at different levels of schools[5].

According to the data the brand new quality of students' groups creates a new HE milieu in which stating the general point that labour market is the tool which creates the motivation for entering HE institutions would be a vast simplification.

Since the transformation processes has started there has not been any divisions into young-old, single-family or any other rooted in the past repartitions. The motives are often described very straightforward, practical/ instrumental and then under the main cover there has been a variety of both conscious and unconscious reasons which cannot be easily divided into market or non-market inspirations. The sources of current motivation reveal the social micro - worlds which have existed in our country for the last years. The division below is the first stage of our qualitative analysis and shows some fields emerge from the data .

1. Old rules supporters

I need a diploma. It can be any subject;
The higher (education level) the better.

The first identified group of non-traditional students could be called "old rules supporters". The scheme seems to be the same as it used to be before the transformational changes appeared but it can be similar only at the beginning, when the manager used to decide

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[4] HE was the number one at the ranking of Polish people life goals while in1983 HE fallowed the economical goods and private fulfillment in family life (Malewski 1992. p.18)

[5] In 1987 the number of non- traditional students in HE was lowered by 61,4%; at secondary- schooling – by 61,8% and at technical schools by 54,7% (Malewski 1992, p.20).

about the need of rising up qualification. Frederick Taylor's theory of motivation suits quite well to the hierarchical way of administrating the company and bearing all the responsibility on manager's shoulder (Gliszczyńska 1981). There has been a minority of students who has still existed in the socialistic milieu at their job societies.

They are mostly motivated by the obligation of the must to have the master degree. For their work there could be any subject, it does not mind what. The main point is the degree if they want to stay at the same post at work. There have not been any promises for the future career just the chance to stay where they are. Those second chance students had about twenty years break in education. They perceive their new state of being a student as a challenge but they value the practical experience they have had more than the university knowledge.

They suffer some economical problems so they choose the cheapest way of studying. For instance the closest HE institution to the place of their living is the better. It happens sometimes that the students are able to get discount if they study at the same institutions as their relatives. So there have been some married couples or parents – children studying together in one group. In this case the family budget is able to save money for common traveling, sharing the materials and paying the fee.

But behind the organizational dimension of their studying appear some emotional spaces they reflect on discovering new features of themselves. It happens that studying becomes a family competition. One mother reveals that studying with his son forces her to be always better prepared for the classes and exams than her son is because she feels the pressure of being the always-right model to be followed. She does not like what she does but she cannot change herself. She has been always afraid of his son results more than of herself.

On the other hand "The old rulers supporters" are not very critical toward the HE institutions and the lectures they attend. They used to live in a very hierarchical system either of educational institution or organization of their work so they perceive the role of the HE very hierarchically, in which both the teacher and the student know their duties.

2. Promotion seekers

I would like to change something in my professional life
and avoid the everyday routine boredom

There is another group of non-traditional students, who do not want only to stay where they are but want to be promoted to higher post. Those students are mostly between ten to

fifteen years after graduating their last schools.

If they were called the "promotion seekers" there would reveal only the small part of the truth. The main goal for them seems to be the advantage of having the master degree certificate. The hidden and the first interpretation suggests being safe on the labour market, which is followed by probable financial promotions if any. They realize very well that graduation does not always mean the high salaries. While analyzing the deeper motives of studying, there can be found at least two spaces introduced by "the promotion seekers".

One is the need to change the daily professional routine, which can be possible when there will be the change in current duties. Another is the desire to meet and spend some time with *'new faces'*, *'meet new people'*, share either private or professional ideas with *'non-everyday watched faces'*. The boredom of every day routine make them looking for the diversity of experiencing new activities which can support their professionalism. Even the motives for looking for promotion starts in everyday boredom, there have been projects for the better future hidden behind them.

Rising up the economical standards/status is followed by the thought of being more autonomous either at work or in private life. That in turns means that the vision of the process of making independent decisions becomes stronger and stronger in their mind. They spread not only the professional knowledge but most of all they say about wider perspectives of seeing the world since they have decided studying.

During the time of attending the HE institution all students recognized the rising level of their self-esteem. They start using the higher level of their self-value in everyday life (not only in their professional one), feeling more and more independent. They often say about *being fulfilled*, *satisfied*, *being in progress* or they mention the possibility of *avoiding the regression*, which they have tasted.

That is a very energetic group which often reflects on their past experience at different schools. They become very critical toward the past negative experiences in education but not so much strong in their criticism toward the present experience in HE.

The past experience very often made them doubtful about their abilities. They stressed very much the fear straight after taking their decision of entering the HE institution. The fear was based in social and personal context. They were frightened of being able to use different school-skills as remembering, recalling etc. But also they felt much tension toward newly meet people as peers in the group.

Other relations they considered at the beginning were the academic teachers and their ways of organizing the lectures. They have their own wisdom, generated through the process

of experiencing life in various contexts. As a result today they support one another saying *Never give up, you can manage* or *It's not easy but not as difficult as you have thought.*

Even if they are much younger than "old rules supporters" they are accustomed to perceive school as a specific ladder. In fact they do not appreciate the traditional model of teaching, they spot the differences among the lecturers but they do follow the rules the teacher suggests. *Teachers are the rulers. The person that our reflective and independent learning depends on is the teacher.* The students consider the transition, which is present in the HE institutions, but they strongly stress that still there has not been many teachers who let students state their opinion.

3. Skills seekers

I study for my future job. I believe studying is going to prepare me for doing my job well

Among different groups of students there has been one whose motivation of taking up studying of special subject dependes on to the future job they want to do. Their motivation is the most practical/instrumental. They often say about job qualifications they look for. They are mostly non-traditional students with not much experience at any work. Relatively younger than the "promotion seekers", and they often confess that the curriculum does not suit their interests but they are under external force of graduating from this type of HE subject. At the very moment they can be called "skills seekers" but it is often suggested that the state of *seeking* changes into the other state. Sometimes it happens quicker than the students realize and they speak about different personal values according to education.

Among skills seekers' there are the students who appeared at this specific subject by chance. Because of lack of choices, (for example the finished recruitments) they are only interested in having the status of students.

4. Day - dreamers
I want to study because I want to help people

The opposite group is motivated exactly by their lifelong interest in some specific subject they have been always interested in. The future post or job is not mentioned at all but the only thing is the will of developing the knowledge they have acquired so far. The group could be classified as "day-dreamers".

Most of the "day-dreamers" believe in their own mission they owe to the world. They are also not very much experienced practitioners with a great passion toward the subject they study. They cannot imagine living for money but for self-fulfilling.

They often get economical support from their parents to be able to study. They express the likes toward organizing the process of lectures. They prefer discussing instead of writing, working in groups instead of individual work.

Getting the external support for studying is also important for them. They like being strengthened. The support can come from the teachers, families, peers or any other social figures. They do not criticize what really exists in the process of framing studying but they mostly articulate what they would like to be instead.

5. Educational myth belivers

I study so hard, but none of my friends cares about it

There has been also the group either of Educational myth belivers who follows the rules of modern society and has a strong ambitious of being well educated. Simply could be said, the most needed thing for them is the certificate but that is a different kind o certificate's values.

They honestly express that they study to have a better social position among the members of the family, close friends or local society. They behave a bit as under the anaesthetization. They have not associated current studying with any labour market at present or in the future but rather they locate themselves in the social contexts and needs. They seem to be lost in a changing world or to study for 'local fame'. It is the social status of Highly Educated person than the academic abilities and skills, which force them to study. They know well, who they are expected to be, but they completely forget about their personal desires, passions and needs and rights. Some of them wish they had not taken up HE. They imagined to be respected at their places of living and working but they experience insensibility. They are surprised not having the social support so they are not sure if they will continue the studying. That is the group which prefers more active and non-traditional methods of studying.

6. Conscious learners

I think that becoming the independent and reflexive student is possible not by following the ideas presented by the teachers but in spite of this ideas

The most critical, reflective and independent learners are those whose motivation came from the deepest inner of their own. They are quite distanced toward these or those subjects of studying even they have chosen something they are in different ways familiar with. They speak of the need of stating and solving problems, developing ourselves, personal flexibility for changes in the world. They are convinced that the education can help in creating their private project for living a life. *The more you understand the richer your life becomes.*

Those "conscious learners" are very critical towards the reproducing the knowledge. They say about exchanging the ideas and building their own theories. They often mention the family in their interviews but there is a different perspective of introducing the family than used to be in nineties (Marczuk 1992, 105-122). The family used to be treated as a main life goal which was rather at the end of the educational path. "The conscious learners" perceive their families as partners in their intellectual development. They often show the source of motivation for studying based in family life and then they focus on the mixture of their life and high school experience which is often shared with the relatives.

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http:// theories/a_motivation.htm

Appendix 1

LEARNING IN HE

	Q33		Q37		Q43		Q50	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	8	4,06%	11	5,58%	7	3,55%	21	10,66%
2	31	15,74%	124	62,94%	67	34,01%	135	68,53%
3	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
4	1	0,51%	2	1,02%	1	0,51%	0	0,00%
5	106	53,81%	38	19,29%	37	18,78%	26	13,20%
6	25	12,69%	1	0,51%	6	3,05%	1	0,51%
0	26	13,20%	21	10,66%	79	40,10%	14	7,11%
Total	197	100,00%	197	100,00%	197	100,00%	197	100,00%

Role of work / life experience in the learning process

Legend:
- 1 – totally agree
- 2 – agree
- 3 – partial agree
- 4 – partial disagree
- 5 – disagree
- 6 – totally disagree
- 0 – don't know
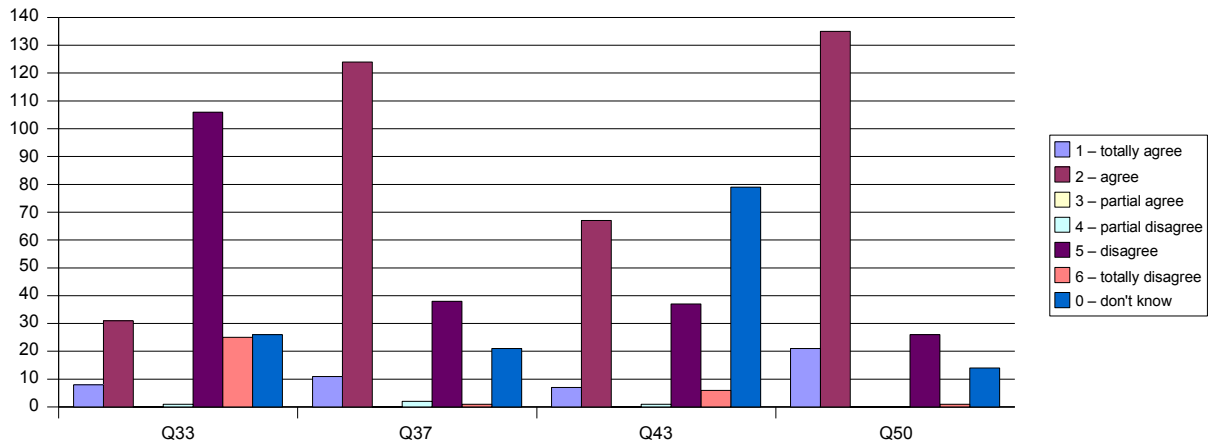
Role of work/ life experience in the learning process:

Q 33   **My work/life experience doesn't support my learning in higher education**

Q 37   **I am learning from the work/life experience of my fellow students**

Q 43   **Lecturers value my work/life experience**

Q 50   **My previous work/ life experience affects my current learning**

	Q21		Q32		Q41		Q48	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	38	19,29%	2	1,02%	2	1,02%	13	6,60%
2	103	52,28%	13	6,60%	37	18,78%	136	69,04%
3	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
4	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
5	42	21,32%	114	57,87%	102	51,78%	21	10,66%
6	0	0,00%	16	8,12%	7	3,55%	1	0,51%
0	14	7,11%	52	26,40%	49	24,87%	26	13,20%
Total	197	100,00%	197	100,00%	197	100,00%	197	100,00%

Individual organization of your learning
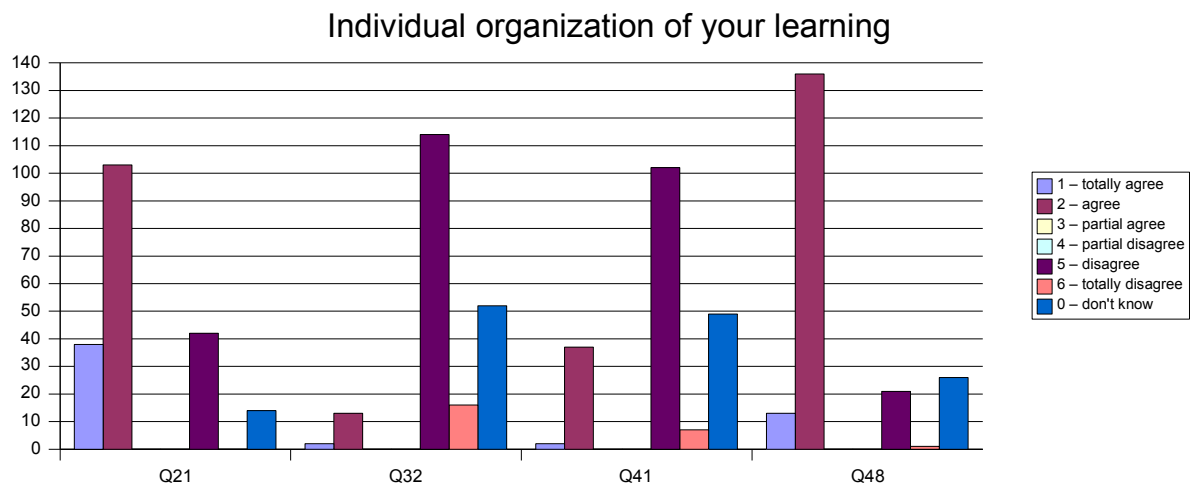
Individual organization of your learning

Q 21   I have changed my approach to learning since I came to higher education

Q 32   The way I learn is taken account of by lecturers

Q 41   I am unsure how lecturers expect me to learn

Q 48   I have a clear idea how I learn

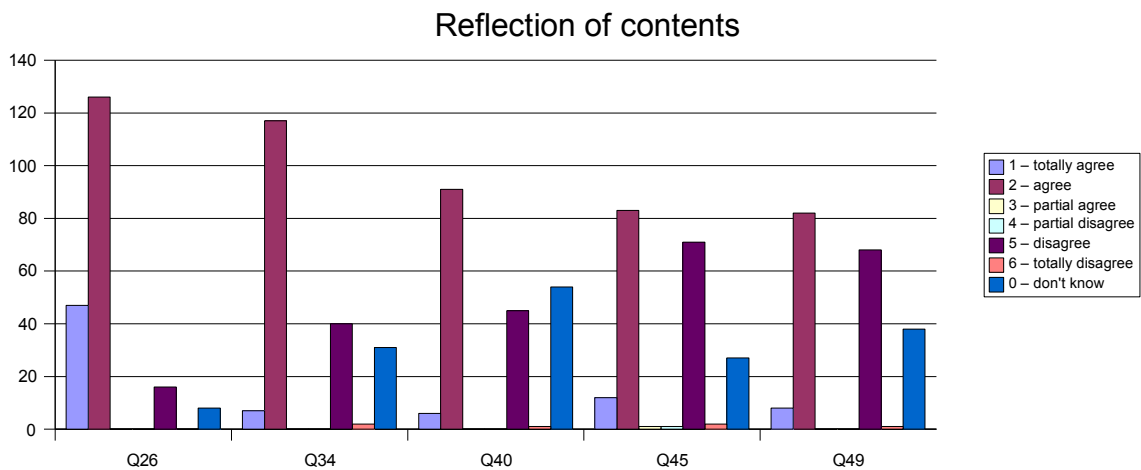|	Q26		Q34		Q40		Q45		Q49	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	47	23,86%	7	3,55%	6	3,05%	12	6,09%	8	4,06%
2	126	63,96%	117	59,39%	91	46,19%	83	42,13%	82	41,62%
3	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	1	0,51%	0	0,00%
4	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	1	0,51%	0	0,00%
5	16	8,12%	40	20,30%	45	22,84%	71	36,04%	68	34,52%
6	0	0,00%	2	1,02%	1	0,51%	2	1,02%	1	0,51%
0	8	4,06%	31	15,74%	54	27,41%	27	13,71%	38	19,29%
Total	197	100,00%	197	100,00%	197	100,00%	197	100,00%	197	100,00%

Reflection of contents

Reflection of contents

**Q 26   The exchange of different views is important to me**

Q 34   In general lecturers expect me to reproduce what I am taught

Q 40   Lecturers encourage critical thinking

Q 45   I like to engage in critical discussions in informal situations

Q 49   I like to engage in critical discussions in seminars, etc.

	Q22		Q25		Q29		Q39	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	49	24,87%	49	24,87%	6	3,05%	15	7,61%
2	121	61,42%	117	59,39%	12	6,09%	147	74,62%
3	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
4	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
5	14	7,11%	18	9,14%	134	68,02%	19	9,64%
6	1	0,51%	1	0,51%	25	12,69%	0	0,00%
0	12	6,09%	12	6,09%	20	10,15%	16	8,12%
Total	197	100,00%	197	100,00%	197	100,00%	197	100,00%

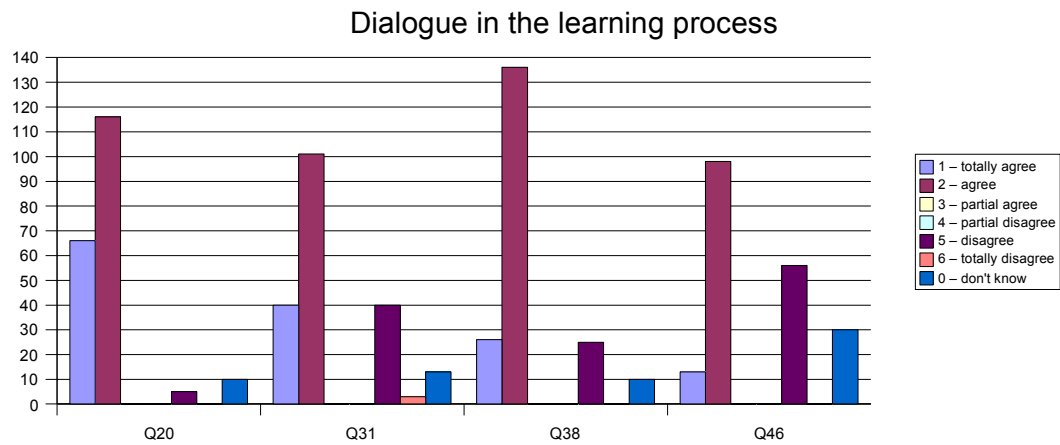Framing of the learning process
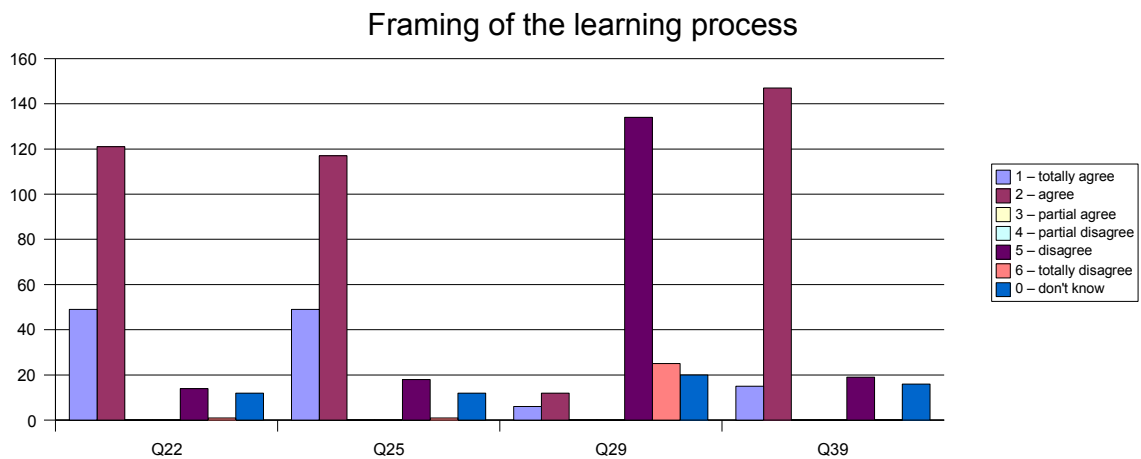
Framing the learning process

Q 22 My background (personal, social, work, etc.) plays an important role in my learning

Q 25 I can't separate my feelings from my learning

Q 29 My life experience prevents me from opening up towards new knowledge

Q 39 My learning is affected by the situation in which I learn

	Q20		Q31		Q38		Q46	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	66	33,50%	40	20,30%	26	13,20%	13	6,60%
2	116	58,88%	101	51,27%	136	69,04%	98	49,75%
3	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
4	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
5	5	2,54%	40	20,30%	25	12,69%	56	28,43%
6	0	0,00%	3	1,52%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
0	10	5,08%	13	6,60%	10	5,08%	30	15,23%
Total	197	100,00%	197	100,00%	197	100,00%	197	100,00%

Dialogue in the learning process

- 1 – totally agree
- 2 – agree
- 3 – partial agree
- 4 – partial disagree
- 5 – disagree
- 6 – totally disagree
- 0 – don't know

**Dialogue in the learning process**

Q 20   I prefer to work in groups

Q 31   I learn best on my own

Q 38   My peers are useful to my learning

Q 46   I learn best through interaction with others

	Q24		Q27		Q44		Q52	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	10	5,08%	22	11,17%	21	10,66%	33	16,75%
2	72	36,55%	111	56,35%	156	79,19%	100	50,76%
3	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	1	0,51%	0	0,00%
4	0	0,00%	2	1,02%	1	0,51%	0	0,00%
5	68	34,52%	40	20,30%	8	4,06%	44	22,34%
6	15	7,61%	1	0,51%	0	0,00%	6	3,05%
0	32	16,24%	21	10,66%	10	5,08%	14	7,11%
Total	197	100,00%	197	100,00%	197	100,00%	197	100,00%

Learning motivation
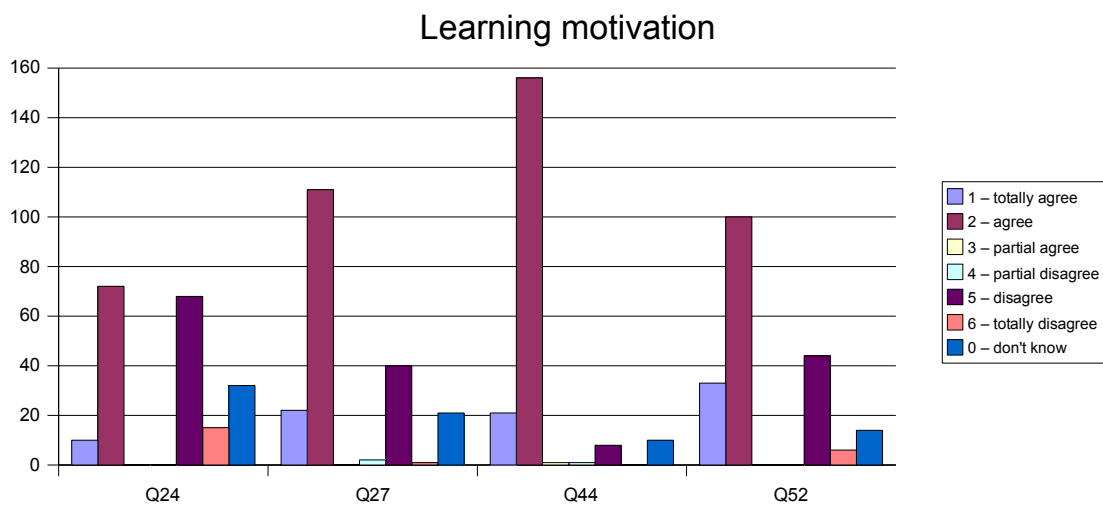
Learning motivation:

Q 24   Sometimes I don't know why I am taking this study

Q 27   The expectations of others towards me to be a successful learner have a great influence on me

Q 44   I am an organized learner

Q 52   I am studying because I want to progress in my career

	Q23		Q28		Q35		Q42		Q51	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	13	6,60%	65	32,99%	28	14,21%	1	0,51%	16	8,12%
2	116	58,88%	118	59,90%	133	67,51%	80	40,61%	98	49,75%
3	1	0,51%	0	0,00%	0	0,51%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
4	1	0,51%	0	0,00%	1	10,66%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
5	42	21,32%	9	4,57%	21	10,66%	91	46,19%	58	29,44%
6	1	0,51%	0	0,00%	1	0,51%	4	2,03%	4	2,03%
0	23	11,68%	5	2,54%	13	6,60%	21	10,66%	21	10,66%
Total	197	100,00%	197	100,00%	197	110,66%	197	100,00%	197	100,00%
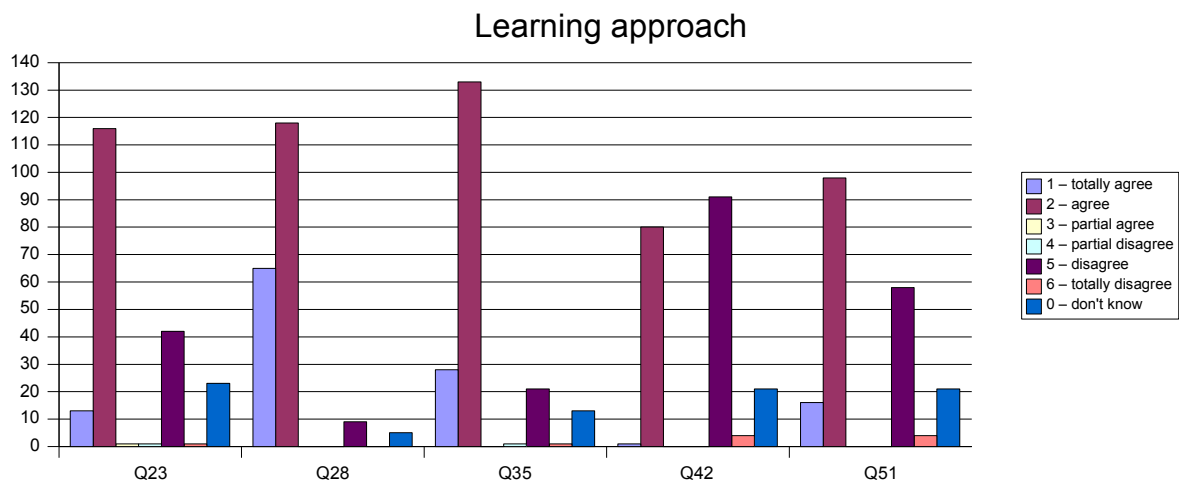
Learning approach

Learning approach:

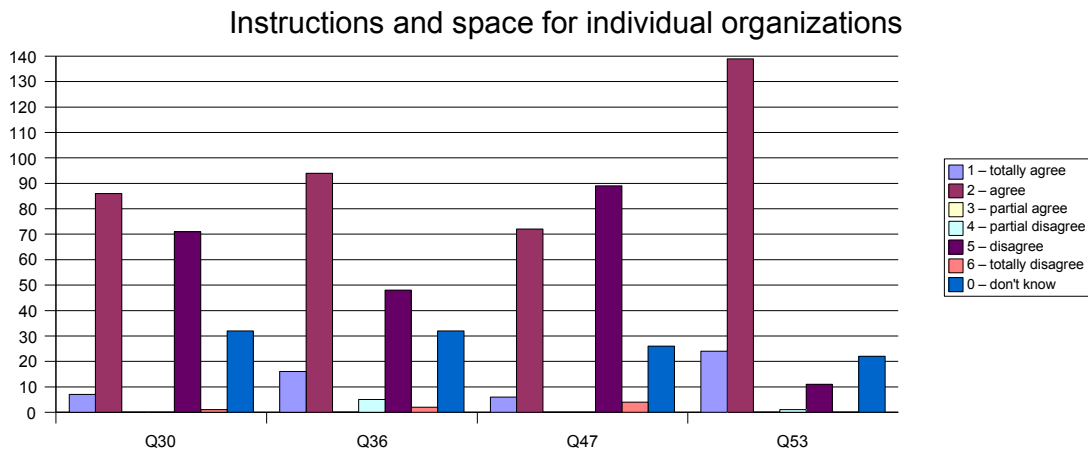**Q 23   Learning is for me quite easy**

Q 28   Learning must have a practical outcome

Q 35   I am an experimental learner

Q 42   I am rather cautious when I begin something new

Q 51   I also learn for the sake of the learning itself

	Q30		Q36		Q47		Q53	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	7	3,55%	16	8,12%	6	3,05%	24	12,18%
2	86	43,65%	94	47,72%	72	36,55%	139	70,56%
3	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
4	0	0,00%	5	2,54%	0	45,18%	1	0,51%
5	71	36,04%	48	24,37%	89	45,18%	11	5,58%
6	1	0,51%	2	1,02%	4	2,03%	0	0,00%
0	32	16,24%	32	16,24%	26	13,20%	22	11,17%
Total	197	100,00%	197	100,00%	197	145,18%	197	100,00%

Instructions and space for individual organizations

Legend:
1 – totally agree
2 – agree
3 – partial agree
4 – partial disagree
5 – disagree
6 – totally disagree
0 – don't know

Instructions and space for individual organization

Q 30   I definitely need support in my learning

Q 36   All strict and rigid instructions disturb my learning

Q 47   Without clear instructions learning is quite difficult for me

Q 53   I learn best when I organize my learning process on my own