

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EFFICIENT TEACHING. RESULTS OF AN ASCERTAINED STUDY

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**ABSTRACT.** The aim of our approach was to investigate and outline to a realistic educational level the existent situation regarding the general opinions of the teachers upon the efficient teaching. We intended to discover, the characteristics of an efficient teaching, methods used by teachers to discuss and systemise information during courses and seminars, the stimulation degree of the students' reflexivity during courses and seminars, modalities to facilitate the absorption of information by the students, the claim to note taking during courses/seminars.

**Keywords:** *Efficient teaching, methods, systemise information, students' reflexivity, taking notes, objectives of the course/seminary, key-terms, individual study.*

**ZUSAMMENFASSUNG.** Der Zweck unserer Schritte war zu forschen und umrissen die vorhandene Lage auf Niveau der Fachausbildungsrealität, hinsichtlich allgemeinen Meinungen des im Lehrgang hineingezogenes Lehrkörpers, über einem wirksamen Unterricht in allgemeinen. Wir waren befangen die Charakteristiken des wirksamen Unterricht aufzufinden, die Art und Weise wie der Lehrkorp verarbeitet und systematisiert die Informationen von Unterrichten und Seminar, wie weitgehend die Reflexivität bei Unterrichten und Seminären angereizt ist, die Art die von den Studenten aufgenommenen Infromationen erleichtert, in welcher Maß erfordern den Studenten Notizen bei Unterricht und Seminar aufzunehmen.

**Stichworte:** *Wirkungsvolle Belehrung, Methoden, Informations Sisetematisierung, Studenten Reflexivität, Notiz nehmen, Zielpunkte des Unterrichts, Schlussausdrücke, individül Studium.*

### Introduction

The aim of our approach was to investigate and outline to a realistic educational level the existent situation regarding the general opinions of the teachers upon the efficient teaching.

We intended to discover:

- The characteristics of an efficient teaching
- Methods used by teachers to discuss and systemise information during courses and seminars

- The stimulation degree of the students' reflexivity during courses and seminars
- Modalities to facilitate the absorption of information by the students
- The claim to note taking during courses/seminars

### Design and procedure

We applied a semi structured interview to assistant lecturers, lecturers and professors. The interview contains 10 questions about the teaching methods. We will further analyse the answers of the interviewed teachers to our semi structured interview.

The first question in the interview solicited the teachers to deeply analyse the teaching process, especially their point of view about the characteristics of an efficient teaching process. Table I.1. illustrates the answers to the first question.

**Table 1.I.**

#### Answers to item 1 of the interview

<b>Which are the characteristics of an efficient teaching in your opinion?</b>
fulfilled objectives
understanding of the content of the lesson
permanent positive feed-back during the entire course/seminary
communication with the students
creation of problem-situations
memorizing the essential aspects of the content
exercising specific abilities: looking for information, solving problems
involvement during the lesson from all the students
situations soliciting students to reflect and analyse
activities responding to the students' needs

Analysing the answers to the first item, we reached the conclusion that the teachers are centred first on the information content of the teaching process and second on exercising the students' learning abilities. One teacher stated: "An efficient teaching process is realised when the teacher is capable of finding specific teaching strategies to motivate the students to involve in the teaching activity." Special credit is also given to the permanent feed-back from the students as a guarantee of an efficient teaching.

The answers to the second item of the interview: „Do you present the objectives of the course/seminary in its introduction?" complete the opinions of the interviewed persons regarding an efficient teaching.

In a hierarchy according to their frequency, the answers to item number 2 shows that the majority of the interviewed teachers state that they always present the objectives of the course/seminary in its introduction (rank I). An analyse on Table 2.I shows the frequency of other variants of answers: the teachers usually present the

objectives of the course/seminary in its introduction (rank II); the teachers usually do not present the objectives of the course/seminary in its introduction (rank III) and the teachers never present the objectives of the course/seminary in its introduction (rank IV).

**Table 2.I.**

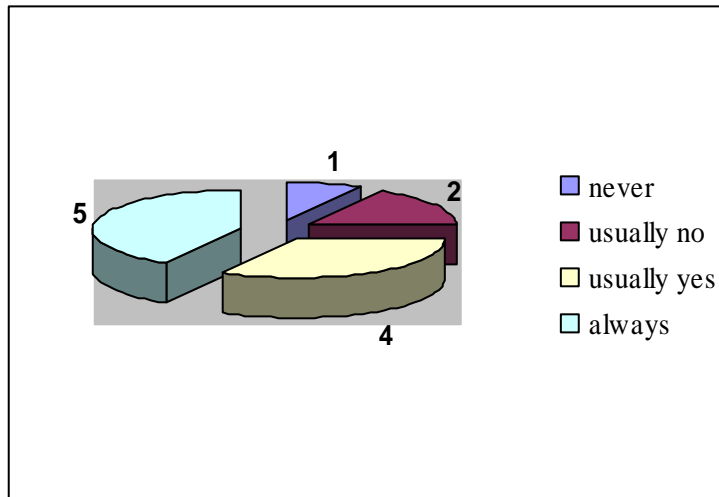
*Distribution of answers to item 2 of the interview*

Do you present the objectives of the course/seminary in its introduction?	Rank
Never	IV
usually no	III
usually yes	II
Always	I

The exact number of teachers responding in a specific manner to item number 2 of the interview is graphically presented in Diagram 1.I.

**Diagram 1.I.**

**Distribution of answers to item 2 of the interview**



Five interviewed professors answered that they always present the objectives of the course/seminary in its introduction. A smaller number of four teachers answered that they usually do present the objectives of the course/seminary in its introduction. A much smaller number of two teachers answered that they usually

do not present the objectives of the course/seminary in its introduction. Only one teacher answered that she/he never presents the objectives of the course/seminary in its introduction. (see Diagram 1.I.).

The third item of the interview interrogates upon another characteristic of the teaching process – whether the teachers do or do not present the key-terms in the introductory part of the course/seminary.

**Table 3.I.**

**Distribution of answers to item 3 of the interview**

Do you present the key-terms of the course/seminary in its introduction?	Answers
Never	3
usually no	5
usually yes	2
Always	2

Most teachers, a number of 5, answered to the third item of the interview that they usually do not present the key-terms of the course/seminary in its introduction. A number of 3 teachers stated that they never present the key-terms of the course/seminary in its introduction and a number of 2 teachers stated that they usually present the key-terms of the course/seminary in its introduction. A number of other 2 teachers answered to the third item of the interview that they always present the key-terms of the course/seminary in its introduction (see Table 3.I).

The answers to this item show that few teachers consider the presentation of the key-terms in the introductory part of the course/seminary as a characteristic of the efficient teaching.

Another characteristic of the efficient teaching is discussed through the fourth item of the interview: “Do you use plans, diagrams, tables, cognitive organizers while teaching?”

**Table 4.I.**

**Distribution of answers to item 4 from the interview**

Do you use plans, diagrams, tables or cognitive organizers while teaching?	Answers
Never	1
usually no	4
usually yes	5
Always	2

The majority of the interviewed teachers, a number of five of them, answered that they usually use plans, diagrams, tables or cognitive organizers while teaching. Other 4 teachers answered that they usually do not use plans, diagrams, tables or cognitive organizers while teaching. A number of 2 teachers answered to this item that they always use plans, diagrams, tables or cognitive organizers while teaching (see Table 4.I.). Only one professor stated that his teaching manner never includes plans, diagrams, tables or cognitive organizers. Our conclusion to this item is that the teachers do not seem interested in the way their students synthesize information from courses and seminars.

The credit given by the teachers to an efficient teaching is reflected by the answers to the fifth item of the interview. This item was created to reveal us the real preoccupation of the teachers for the way their students understand the informational content of the course/seminary. The above mentioned preoccupation is concretized in item number 5 by the teachers' activity of addressing their students feed-back questions.

**Table 5.I.**  
**Distribution of answers to item 5 of the interview**

Do you address feed-back questions to the students in order to verify the degree of understanding of the informational content of the course/seminary?	Answers
Never	1
usually no	3
usually yes	4
Always	4

A number of 4 teachers answered "always" to item number 5. "Usually yes" was the answer of 4 teachers to the same item. A number of 3 teachers answered to item number 5 that they usually do not address feed-back questions to the students to verify the degree of understanding of the informational content of the course/seminary. Only one teacher answered that she/he never addresses feed-back questions to the students for verifying the degree of understanding of the informational content of the course/seminary (see Table 5.I.). The answers to this item show, from our point of view, that the teachers are giving a high credit to the informational content of the course/seminary, being in the same time preoccupied of the students' good understanding of the informational content.

The sixth item of the interview shows the importance the teachers give not only to the informational content of the course/seminary, but also to its reception and understanding by the students. We designed this item in order to reveal whether the teachers are interested in creating time for reflection or individual study during the course/seminary.

**Table 6.I.**  
**Distribution of answers to item 6 of the interview**

Do you create time for reflection or individual study during the course/seminary?	Answers
Never	2
usually no	4
usually yes	5
Always	1

Table 6.I. reveals the fact that six teachers affirmed that they usually create time for reflection or individual study during the course/seminary. A number of 4 teachers affirmed that they usually do not create time for reflection or individual study during the course/seminary. The answers from the extremes poles of the answering variants were offered by a small number of teachers. Only one teacher affirmed that she/he always create time for reflection or individual study during the course/seminary and only 2 teachers affirmed that they never create time for reflection or individual study during the course/seminary. In our opinion, the interviewed teachers do not seem interested in using the students' reflexivity during the educational process. They do not either seem interested in assuring necessary and usefull moments of individual study during courses/seminars.

Item number seven of the interview refers to the effective learning activity, especially to their approach of different learning tasks.

**Table 7.I.**  
**Distribution of answers to item 7 of the interview**

Do you ask students to describe their approach of different learning tasks?	Answers
Never	5
usually no	4
usually yes	2
Always	1

The answers to this item indicate the fact that the teachers do not seem interested in the learning techniques their students use. The answers are as follows: 5 teacher answered that they never ask the students to describe their approach of different learning tasks; 4 teachers answered that they usually do not ask the students to describe their approach of different learning tasks; 2 teachers answered that they usually ask the students to describe their approach of different learning tasks and only one teacher answered that she/he always asks the students to describe their approach of different learning tasks (see Table 7.1.).

Analysing the answers to this item lead us to the conclusion that teachers are centred more on the teaching activity to the prejudice of the observance of the effective learning process.

Item number eight of the interview solicits the teachers to identify effective strategies for the students' support in the process of information absorption.

One teacher answered to this item: "I try during the teaching process to use interactive teaching techniques and I ask students to prove me in practice that they have understood the theoretical part of the course/seminary."

**Table 8.I.**

**Distribution of answers to item 8 of the interview**

Enumerate at least three strategies you are using in order to facilitate the information absorption by the students	Answers
I use modern materials	9
I use modern didactic strategies	9
I draw schemes	7
I use explanation as didactic method	4
I write on the blackboard the main ideas	4
I emphasize the important ideas	3

We introduced this item in order to verify if the teacher reflect upon their teaching techniques as facilitation means for the absorption of information by the students. We grouped the answers in categories and formed a hierarchical system on the base of their frequency, as seen in Table 8.I.

**Diagram 2.I.**

**Distribution of answers to item 8 of the interview**

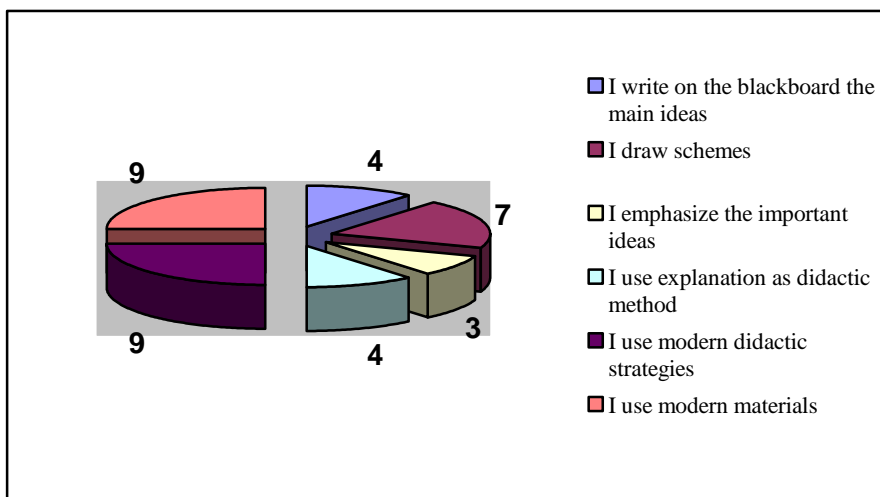


Diagram 2.I. indicates that the techniques of the teachers for facilitating the absorption of the information by the students are: 9 answers show the teachers are using for the described purpose modern didactic strategies; another 9 answers reveal the use of modern materials; 7 answers state that the teachers use schemes for the intended purpose; 4 answers reveal the use of explanation as didactic method; other 4 answers reveal schemes drawn on the table as technique to facilitate the absorption of information by the students; a number of 4 answers are strategically centred on writing on the table the main ideas of the course/seminary; a number of 3 answers indicate highlighting of the main ideas during the course/seminary as preferred technique by the teachers.

We intended to observe using question number nine if the teachers ask students to systemize information during courses and seminars.

**Table 9.I.**  
**Distribution of answers to item 9 of the interview**

Do you ask students to systemize information during courses and seminars?	Answers
Never	4
usually no	6
usually yes	1
Always	1

Table 9.I. shows that systemizing information is strictly the students' option. Most teachers, 6 of them, stated that they usually do not ask students to systemize the information they receive during courses and seminars. Other teachers, 4 of them, stated that they never ask students to systemize the information they receive during courses and seminars. The number of teachers asking students to systemize the information they receive during courses and seminars is small. Only one teacher stated that she/he always asks students to systemize the information. Also one teacher stated that she/he usually asks students to systemize the information they receive during courses and seminars.

Studying the answers to question number ten gives us perspectives upon the concrete demands the teachers make to their students while note taking.

**Table 10.I.**  
**Distribution of answers to item 10 of the interview**

Which are the requirements in case you ask student specific things to note?	Answers
I ask them to note all the definitions	4
I ask them to note everything I teach	2
I only ask them to note the examples I give	2
I ask them to note the important ideas I highlight	4



We observed while quantifying the answers to item number ten of the interview that the majority of answers describe two ways of taking notes. The number of teachers asking the students to note all the definitions is 4. Other 4 teachers ask the student to note the important ideas highlighted by the teacher. The other answers show that only 2 teachers ask their students to note all the information and also 2 teachers ask their students to note only the given examples. (see Table 10.I.). Analysing all the answers reveals a lack of interest regarding the students' technique for taking notes. The examples sustain our conclusion.

A last item of the interview refers to the final evaluation of the students and its most frequent criteria.

The answers to this item are as follows: 5 teachers, most of them, stated as criterion the answer to the final evaluation test; 2 teachers indicated the students' activity during the course as criterion; 2 teachers indicated the students' activity during the course and also during the seminary as criterion for the final evaluation; only one teacher considers the students' work during the entire semester as criterion for the final evaluation; only one teacher uses as criterion the number and the quality of the practical examples given by the students; only one teacher centres his evaluation on the students' capacity to make connections between pieces of information. (see Table 11.I.). One teacher answered to item 11 as follows: "I consider several aspects when I evaluate a student: his answers during the final evaluation test, the quality of the material he presented for the seminars and the student's expressed interest for the discipline."

**Table 11.I.**

**Distribution of answers to item 11 of the interview**

Which are the criteria most frequently used for the students' evaluation?	Answers
the students' activity during the course	2
the students' activity during the course and during the seminar	2
the students' work during the entire semester	1
the students' answers from the final evaluation test	5
the students' capacity to make connections between pieces of information	1
the number and the quality of the examples given by the students	1

While analyzing the answers to this item, we observed a pregnant preference of the teachers for the students' answers during the final evaluation test as criterion of the evaluation. In the same time, the role of students' capacity to analyse and to make logical connections between pieces of information has an insignificant role in the process of the final evaluation.

**We state the following conclusions to our study:**

- ❖ most teachers are centred during an efficient teaching process on the transmission of the contents and on exercising the necessary abilities of the students during their learning process;
- ❖ most of the interviewed teachers presents the objectives of the course/seminary in its introduction;
- ❖ few teachers present the key-terms of the course/seminary in its introduction;
- ❖ most teachers synthesize the information they present to the students;
- ❖ teachers pay a significant attention to the understanding process of the informational content of the lesson;
- ❖ teachers do not seem interested in the individual study of the students for the discipline;
- ❖ teachers do not associate the learning efficiency with the students' capacity to describe their approach of the learning process;
- ❖ teachers use and teach with the help of the modern didactical methods and means;
- ❖ a small number of teachers recommends taking notes methods to their students;
- ❖ teachers do not seem interested in the taking notes techniques used by their students;
- ❖ teachers strictly evaluate the answers of the students during a final evaluation test.

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