

WAYS OF CONDUCTING THE ACADEMIC SEMINAR

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ABSTRACT. This study aims to identify the ways of conducting the seminars most commonly used in university, but also the ways of conducting the seminars with educational sciences. For this, a semi-structured interview was applied to students from the Faculty of Biology and of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Psychology Department, a total of 98 subjects. The interview included 10 questions about the ways of conducting the academic seminar. For illustration, there have been presented and analyzed the answers of five of the interview's questions. The analysis of the students' answers shows that interactive ways of conducting the seminars are most often used. Students think that these ways are useful because they lead to an easy assimilation of information, and also, to their comprehension.

Keywords: *the ways of conducting, the seminars, assimilation of information.*

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG. Diese Studie zielt darauf ab, die Durchführung Möglichkeiten von Seminare, die am häufigsten in der Universität verwendet werden, aber auch die Art und Weise der Durchführung von Seminaren im Bildungsbereich zu identifizieren. Dafür hat man ein semi-strukturiertes Interview den Studenten aus der Fakultät für Biologie und den Studenten aus der Fakultät für Psychologie und Erziehungswissenschaften, Abteilung Psychologie, insgesamt 98 Studenten, angewandt. Das Interview umfasste 10 Fragen über die Durchführung Möglichkeiten von Seminare in der Universität. Zur Veranschaulichung, wurden die Antworten von 5 Fragen des Interviews analysiert und vorgestellt. Die Analyse der Rückmeldungen von Studenten zeigt, dass am häufigsten verwendeten Durchführung Möglichkeiten die interaktive Durchführungen sind. Die Studenten schätzen als nützlich diese Möglichkeiten, weil diese auf eine einfache Verarbeitung und Verständnis von Informationen führen.

Schlüsselwörter: *Durchführungsmöglichkeiten, Seminar, Interaktivität, Information Verständnis.*

Regarding university education, the curricular reform is primarily focused on the transition from a teaching-centred education to a learning-centred education. A teaching-centred education means a teaching focused on the student, on his own

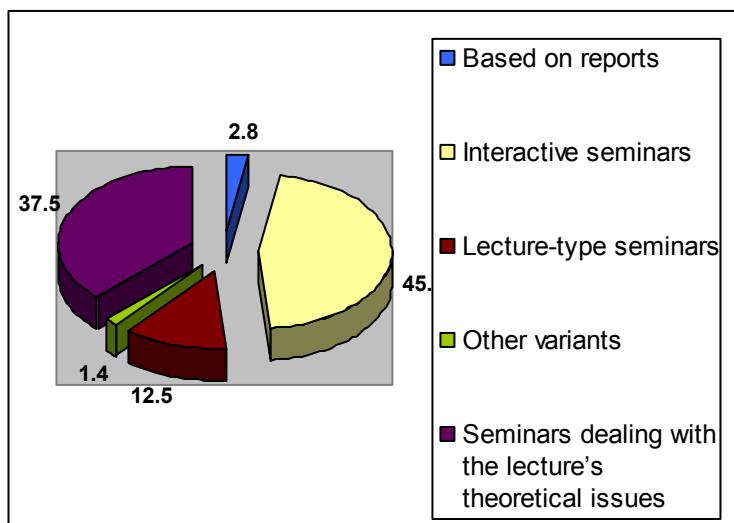
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way of processing information, it implies changes in the teacher's role (he designs, he organizes and he monitors the learning situations), it involves redefining the educational objectives (more transparent, clearer and more realistically stated, more dynamic), changes in the teaching-learning-assessment strategies, a diversification of the forms of teaching's-learning's organization, and also curricular flexibility.

It is known that the main forms of teaching and learning organization at higher education generally are: the lecture, the seminar. Each of these established forms of organization involves the differentiated use of some teaching methods or strategies: conversation, relation, lecture, cooperative learning methods, methods of higher thinking skills' development, problem solving learning methods, therefore, the category of traditional methods and strategies, but also that of the modern ones. Selecting a certain strategy, respectively teaching methods, by the teaching staff depends on the content to be forwarded, on the students' education level, on the type of skills that we aim to form and develop in students. The teacher chooses thus, one or another form of organization of his educational activity, for the use of a certain strategy or teaching method, considering the limitations and benefits of each.

In this study we aim to identify the ways of conducting the seminars most often used in university, but also the ways of conducting the seminars with educational sciences. For this, we have applied a semi-structured interview to students from the Faculty of Biology and of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Psychology Department, a total of 98 subjects. The interview included 10 questions about the ways of conducting the academic seminar. For illustration, we present and analyze the answers to five questions interview.

Question 1

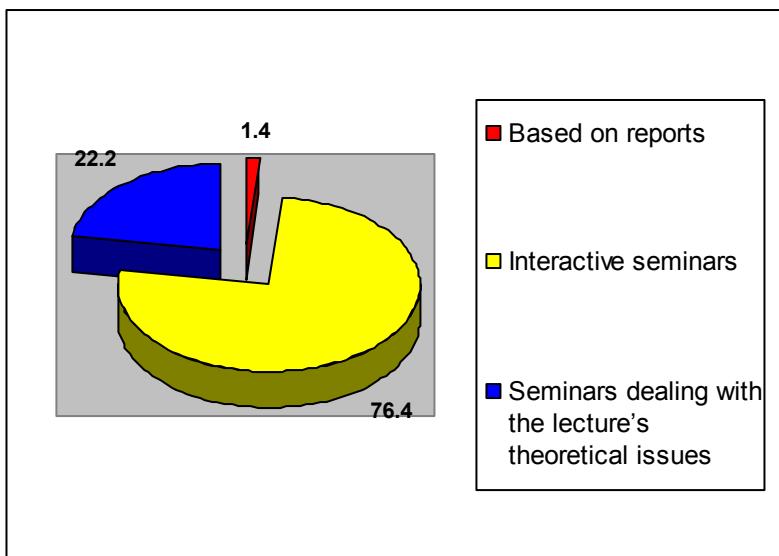


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Which are, in general, the ways of conducting the seminars in university?	Answers (%)
Interactive seminars	45,8
Seminars dealing with the lecture's theoretical issues	37,5
Lecture-type seminars	12,5
Based on reports	2,8
Other variants	1,4

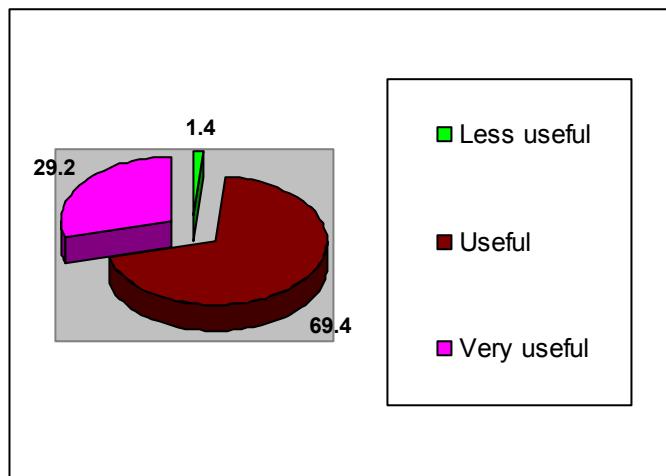
Analyzing the answers given by students, we see that 45% of the respondents believe that in university prevail the interactive seminars and 37.5% the debate-type seminars, answers denoting that the traditional methods of conducting the seminars (paper type) have been abandoned and that the student-centred teaching is really promoted.

Question 2

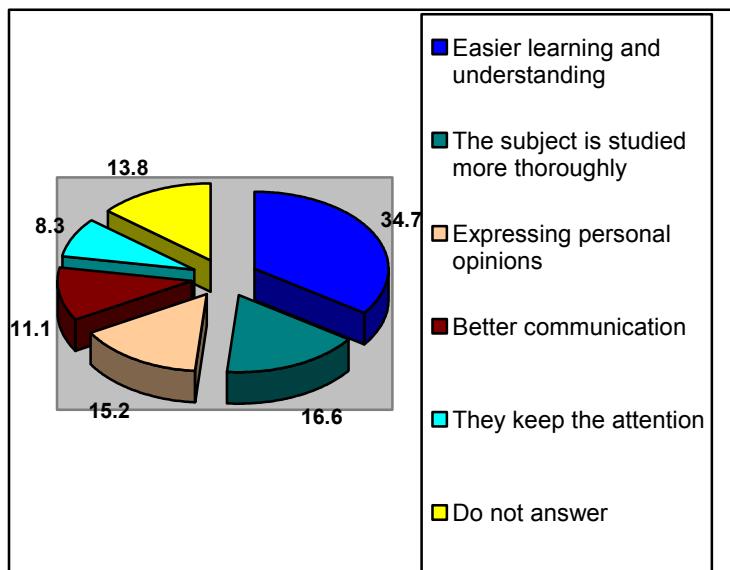


Which are the ways of conducting the seminars on Pedagogy?	Answers (%)
Interactive seminars	76,4
Seminars dealing with the lecture's theoretical issues	22,2
Based on reports	1,4

An encouraging aspect is that students think that the seminars on Pedagogy are interactive seminars (76.4%) and debate-type seminars (22.2%).

Question 3

Do you think that the way of conducting the seminars on Pedagogy, circled in the previous paragraph is:	Answers (%)
Useful	69,4
Very useful	29,2
Less useful	1,4

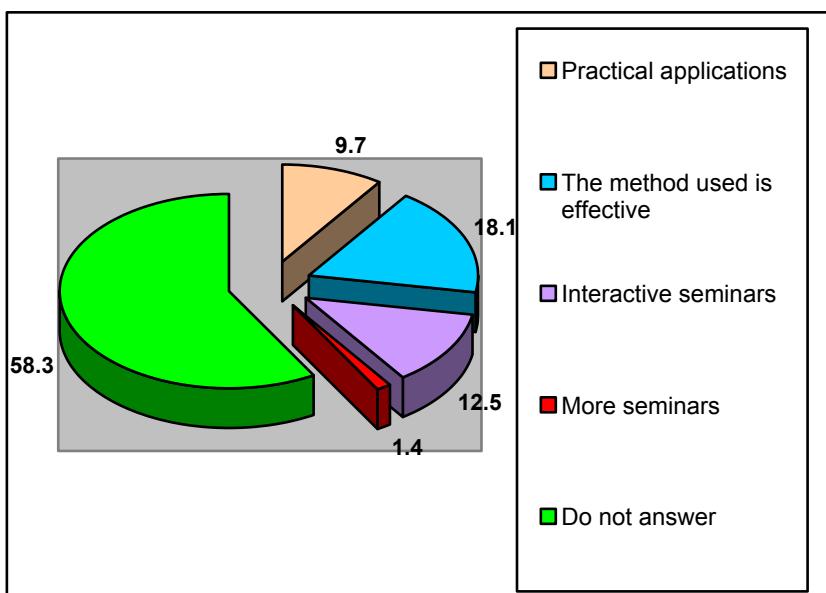
Question 4

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We find that students see the interactive seminars as a useful and very useful way of conducting (69%, respectively 29.2%) the instructive-educative activity, because, this way, they understand more easily the information and retain the contents faster.

Explain your choice for the previous item	Answers (%)
Easier learning and understanding	34,7
The subject is studied more thoroughly	16,6
Expressing personal opinions	15,2
Do not answer	13,8
Better communication	11,1
They keep the attention	8,3

Question 5



Suggest another way of more effectively conducting the seminars on Pedagogy and argue your proposal	Answers (%)
Do not answer	58,3
The method used is effective	18,1
Interactive seminars	12,5
Practical applications	9,7
More seminars	1,4

We therefore plead for conducting lectures and seminars in which the students' activation to prevail.

The students' activation during seminars implies the information's individual seeking, their processing, comprehension and the individual generalization, the knowledge requires construction with emphasis on skills, competencies, and especially on procedures and methods. There dominates the reflecting on self cognitive experiences, on personal processing of data and information, on individual understanding, on own construction of knowledge, on meta-cognition in self-regulation of intellectual processes. In the end, the newly formed schemes are internal cognitive structures that will incorporate the new experiences. The activation requires the student to independently articulate, encode and decode the knowledge's new meanings and significances. The student develops activities of observation, of critical analysis, of data processing, of interpretation, of hypothesis formulation, of research, of structuring, and then of design and development of the new knowledge and information. Learning is based on the already existing cognitive experience, updated by the strategies of intellectual activity.

The seminar teacher's role in the students' activation is that of a tutor, a facilitator, a "coach", he facilitates students the learning in their own style, providing models, differentiated and personalized support and guidance. For the students' intellectual stimulation, the assistant professor asks questions, gives time to think for seeking the answers, he observes, he exercises, collaborate, guides, he initiates the debates, the dialogues, and the cooperation among students. He applies a democratic management in the group of students, he organizes the learning tasks, encourages the students in choosing the strategies of intellectual activity, he stimulates them to engage in self searches, to make judgments, to ask questions. The seminar teacher organizes the intellectual activity, he communicates with the students, he stimulates them and he permanently relates to their interests.

For the seminar activities' successful conducting, we thus, strongly plead for the use of activating training strategies aimed at the students' active intellectual participation in teaching - learning and which to support the formation of effective skills of intellectual activity (problem solving, critical thinking, active reading). The competences generally concerned, in the seminar, by virtue of an intellectual activation are: the students' gain of extensive knowledge, and especially the development of the capacity for understanding the ideas conveyed at the lecture, the development of the students' capacity for organization and planning, of their capacity for synthesis and abstraction, of their capacity for problem solving, of their critical thinking skills, of the interpersonal skills, of their skills to work in groups, of the ability to apply knowledge in practice, of the ability to adapt to new situations, the development of the students' ability to think and act independently, of their initiative, etc.

The seminar teacher gives students the opportunity to acquire information, to form and develop skills in a favourable context, promoting an open, flexible, positive and responsive attitude. In order to stimulate the students' intellectual

activation and their creativity, the teacher himself must have a positive attitude and behaviour in this respect. “Interactive and creative training” resizes the teacher’s roles and hypostasis. Their inventory is done by Mușata Bocoș (2002), the teacher is:

- An educator who does not require scientific information, but who “builds learning devices”, practicing a differentiated and individualized pedagogy;
- A designer, a tutor, a manager, a moderator, an organizer and a manager of content, activities and formation experiences;
- A learning process’ mediator in a heuristic framework;
- A facilitator of learning and self-formation;
- A learning adviser;
- A partner in an interactive educational relationship;
- A coordinator of activities;
- An animator, a catalyst and an activator of the formation activity, of communication, of interactions and exchanges between individuals;
- A scenographer, preparing the scenery for conducting the effective learning;
- An actor of instructive-educative approaches;
- A thoughtful strategist to help building knowledge through permanent restructuring;
- Reflexive during, before and after the educational action, promoting reflexive thinking and reflexive teaching;
- A co-evaluator of the learning process and product;

Intellectual activation occurs when the student “really intervenes in teaching and alters its variables, its proper parameters: he endeavours personal reflection, thought, he carries out mental and practical search and research actions, rediscovers new truths, rebuilds and resizes new knowledge, being aware that external influences and messages always act through internal conditions” (Mușata Bocoș, 2002, p 64).

The active and creative student displays boldness for a product’s critical appreciation, independence for the problems’ approach and analysis, counter-argument spirit, freedom in general behavioural manifestation.

The active and creative student is characterized by spirit of independence at work, long tracks thinking, without cognitive barriers, showing a strong and unusual tendency to explore and create.

We also propose some action guidelines for the students’ activation within the university seminar:

- Students’ continuous guidance in preparing some plans of ideas and summaries of the read texts and works,
- Students’ initiation in the preparation and presentation of essays, reports and communications - as effective ways for them to familiarize with the requirements of creative activity,
- Enabling students with elaboration and presentation methods and techniques of individual and group projects, including the project management,

- Students' initiation in the scientific research methodology in terms of standards imposed by the Bologna Process and by the EU,
- Students' initiation in the use of auxiliary tools to enrich knowledge and to solve learning tasks (dictionaries, encyclopaedias, chrestomathies, media information, etc.),
- Compliance with a reasonable daily regimen of study and recreation,

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