Enhancing Teaching Practice in Higher Education in RUSSIA and CHINA (ENTEP)

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ENTEP ANALYTICAL REPORT

Prepared by Morena Cuconato, Marta Ilardo (UNIBO, Bologna)

Teaching practices in Russian and Chinese Heigher School

Project type: capacity-building project in the field of higher education is transnational cooperation project, based on multilateral partnerships, primarily between higher education institutions (HEIs) from Program and eligible Partner Countries with the involvement of non-academic partners to strengthen the links with society and to reinforce the systemic impact of the project. Capacity-building project aims to support institutions and systems in their modernization and internationalization process.

INTRODUCTION

Globalisation and the evolution of the knowledge-based economy have caused dramatic changes in the character and functions of higher education in most countries around the world. However, the impacts of globalisation on universities are not uniform even though similar business-like practices have been adopted to cope with competition in the global marketplace. The pressure for restructuring and reforming higher education is mainly derived from growing expectations and demands of different stakeholders in society. In the last decade, government bureaucracy, public service institutions and higher education institutions (HEIs) and universities have been significantly affected by the tidal wave of the public sector reform around the world. Apart from improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public services, universities are confronted with a situation in which the principles of financial accountability and responsiveness to stakeholders prevail amidst the massification stage under the condition of global economic retrenchment.

In response to such pressing demands for change, policies and strategies of decentralisation, privatisation and marketisation are becoming increasingly popular measures in university governance. Reform strategies and measures like quality assurance, performance evaluation, financial audit, corporate management and market competition are adopted to reform and improve the performance of the higher education sector. However, this report examines the most recent educational modernization process in Russia and China, with particular reference to the issues related to update teacher training in higher education. Both countries needs to reach a national consensus on the future mission of (higher) education as these societies faces two key and in some way contradictory challenges:

1) Supporting the younger generation to take an active part in the sociocultural construction with the aim of overcoming the barriers between different social and cultural groups;
2) Attaining a unique position in the international education market.

The ENTEP project

In this direction, the wider objective of the ENTEP project, financed under the capacity building Erasmus + Program (2017-2019), is to contribute to the higher education reform in Russia and China through establishing a system of sustainable professional development in higher education on the basis of the best EU teaching practices and equipped with contemporary innovative teaching methodologies and pedagogical approaches with the emphasis on quality and regulation.

This wider objective implies the following nine specific objectives:

1. To identify weaknesses, needs and emerging issues in teaching practices in PCIs and match them with the best EU teaching practices.
2. To internationalize and harmonize teaching practices in Europe, Russia and China through the series of workshops and seminars introducing major principles of European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and to improve qualification of the PCIs' teaching staff of in educational methods and pedagogical approaches allowing them to build on innovation strategies and up-dated contents.
3. To establish a university-wide, cross-departmental network of Centres for Teaching & Learning in Russian and Chinese Universities, and to enable their staff to support each other and develop their own expertise and research as specialists in educational development.
4. To develop a comprehensive set of professional guidelines for teacher training providers and leaders and to introduce learning and teaching tools, methodologies and pedagogical approaches including learning outcomes and ICT practices, blended courses and mobility strands between PCIs and EUIs.
5. To design and deliver modern, module-based pilot curriculum for higher education teacher training, based on contemporary education science and aimed at professional development of the academic staff.
6. To modernize the existing PhD and Master's degree programs through introducing modules on Teaching Methodology, Pedagogy and Psychology into curricula.

7. To share contemporary educational approaches with Quality Assurance Units of RU and CN Universities responsible for quality control and monitoring procedures at PCIs and thereby enhance quality, relevance and convergence with EU initiatives. To establish internal and external project quality control and monitoring procedures at PCIs.
8. To disseminate project outcomes and best practices in higher education sector of Russia and China and to ensure sustainability of Centres for Teaching & Learning and new programs beyond the project life and to maximize their effectiveness.
9. To ensure effective and efficient project and program management throughout the project life.

These specific objectives of the ENTEP project are pursued through a set of focused actions organized in nine interrelated work packages (WPs), which follow a logical sequence, actively involving academic and administrative staff from all PCIs and EUIs, and leading to concrete tangible and intangible results.

The state of art (WP1): Theoretical framework and methodology

This report has the double aim of illustrating the most recent structural reforms of the Russian and Chinese HEIs and understanding teacher perceptions of their professional identity in term of modernization of their teaching practices as implied in the structural reforms. Therefore, we adopt here an integrated research model based on an interactionist approach considering the mutual influence between the reform of the institutional asset of education (macro-level) and the (teacher) individual pedagogical approach to the teaching-learning process (micro-level). Therefore, from the one side, based on a desk research the report would provide an overview of current reforms on education in Russia and China, with a particular focus on policy reform, participation, motivation and 'innovation hurdles' over the last two decades. From the other side, based on a questionnaire submitted to Chinese and Russian HEIs teachers trainers, identified by the Russian and Chinese participant to the project Entep , it tries to highlight how teacher copes with the challenges affecting the HEIs' reform process. The aims is to detect whether and to what extent reform in education is contributing to the professional development of a new generation of teachers, which from their side will be ready to leave behind the traditional way of being a teacher, developing a new professional identity (rather identities) to help a Student centred learning environment.

Therefore, in order to investigate the quality and the emerging issues in the teaching and learning strategies used by higher school teachers in Russia and in China, we adopt a qualitative approach. The aim of this field research is

"collecting impressions, individual or collective representations of specific facts and experiences" (Demetrio, 2018). Due to the small number of questionnaires (57 responders), the finding could not be generalized but rather used to provide a rich, contextualized understanding of some aspect of teacher experience through particular cases. The qualitative analysis, in this case, consider above all the relationship between the emerging data, the contexts of belonging and the possible meanings that people attribute to their experiences. (Mantovani, 1995). This means that, from a methodological point of view, the questionnaires were analysed according to a constructivist-phenomenological paradigm. In this way, the aim is to encourage the analysis of the complexity starting from the individual perception of a concrete problem (Dewey, 1933). In keeping with phenomenological methodology, data was analysed using template analysis (King, 2004). Preparing the questionnaire, we adopt three "a priori" themes regarding the three phases of the teacher activities on which it is based the Student Centered Learning (SCL) approach promoted in the EHEA that is planning, implementation and evaluation. Therefore, our analysis started with these a priori codes, identifying themes strongly expected to be relevant to the analysis. However, we keeè in mind that these codes should be modified or dispensed with, if they do not prove to be useful or appropriate to the actual data examined. Our first step of the analysis was therefore to begin reading through the data, marking any segments that appear to tell us something of relevance to the research question(s). Where such segments corresponded to a priori themes, they were coded as such into an initial template after initial coding of a sub-set of the data. Ongoing we have detected new themes and added them to the initial template, which is then applied is to the whole data set and modified in the light of careful consideration of each transcript. After that all questionnaire have been coded to it, the template serves as the basis for our analysis of the data set and the writing up of the second section of the report.

These finding provide us with some important information about teachers knowledge and their perceived theoretical and methodological gaps, securing the evidence basis on which the contents and the methodologies of the training courses held in the European university and targeted to the Chinese and the Russian top managers and teachers (WP2) participating in the ENTEP project will be organised. According to its capacity building nature, the project foresees to train thirty-five top managers (Rectors, Vice-rectors and Deans) and thirty-five teaching staff of PCIs are trained by EU experts on tuning educational structures in EHEA and Bologna principles and in innovative pedagogy, delivery methods, assessment techniques and quality assurance procedures and their pedagogical qualification is improved via professional development workshops.

The present report is structured in two part, the first two sections describes the modernization of higher education both in Russia and China. The second part, start with a section about the teacher profession in the knowledge society that is followed by the presentation of our analysis of teachers questionnaire and some recommendations providing a deep insight in the principle of the students centred lerning approach. In the table below, we schematize the different step of our working process.

Steps Actions

1) Definition of research questions
2) Definition of the research plan (questions, problems)
3) Desk research on the modernisation of HEIs in Russia and China
4) Construction of the questionnaire
5) Submission of questionnaires to teachers
6) Collection and analysis of the questionnaires
7) Coding process and writing of the research report
8) Feedback to the subjects involved in the training course in Bologna

The Modernization of Higher Education in Russia

Russia had to face with a state of confusion during its first years of democracy in the early 1990s. 26th December 1991 marked the birth of 'new' Russia and the former Soviet institutions had to adapt to a new context in order to survive the newly established Russian conditions. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the centralized economic system broke down and the iron curtain fell. The state started to operate in a new political and economic environment.

The 1990s represented a difficult period due to the many social, economic and political upheavals that made evident the juxtaposition of the Russian economic and education systems. The economic recession of this decade led to a sharp decrease in industry demand for employees with up-to-date qualifications. This increased the gap between the educational system and the labor market: educational establishments continued to function without getting any signals from the market. The reconstruction of the economy after the year 2000 used the accumulated supply of qualified specialists, but most of the vocational schools were unable to provide labor markets with employees, who were equipped with the necessary qualifications in contemporary technologies.

To cope with this lack, major changes have been introduced in Russia's education system during the last 20 years of democracy. However, it seems that Russia is

still a country in transition, seeking modernization in order to face Europeanisation and globalisation processes.

In this direction, Russia has adopted the Bologna Process (cf. COFER et al., 2015, p. 66-67) in spite of not being part of the European Union and as all other country, is experiencing at different level (i.e. markets, information, political, culture, military) the fast-paced process of globalisation. The discrepancy between the developments of market economy (and society as a whole) and the time the educational system need to react to economic and societal challenges is a well-known problem of the globalized world. However, in the Russian Federation, the educational system as a whole, was even less aligned with the neoliberal mechanisms and values of the free market economy (competition, initiative, self-management, choice, responsibility, dynamism, among others). Therefore, the state reacted fearing that the diverging paths of development could bring education in Russia into a risk zone and adopted a series or reform in order to adapt and re-invent the educational system in the light of this new reality.

The main questions to be answered regarded the social and individual meaning of education, its main goals and the way in which it has to be organized and financed. These crucial issues had a significant impact on HE. In this connection, the policy of modernization was grounded on three principles: access, quality, and efficiency. Its aim was to the establishing of a modern HE system, encompassing professional education, vocational training and lifelong learning in order to foster the development of human capital, which represents a change to its more traditional role of enhancing cultural and academic developments. Scholars highlight this as a fundamental change. HEIs take on the functional role of preparing individuals first as labor force instead of enhancing knowledge, competences and culture as intrinsic values of individuals and society (cf. MORGAN and KLIUCHAREV, 2012, p. 3, 6). Concerning the access to HE, Russia reached its goal to promote it. Currently, around 78.9% of the population is engaged in it (COFER et al., 2015, p. 73).

However, the process of modernization has been a controversial question since Russia co-signed the Bologna Declaration in 2003. In October 2007, Russia enacted a law that replaces the traditional five-year model of HE with a two-tiered approach: a four-year bachelor degree followed by a two-year master degree, a structure more in line with the Bologna process and with existing Western degree. Guriyev (2007) criticized the law for its merely formal approach: instead of reshaping their curriculum, universities would simply insert a BSc/BA accreditation in the middle of their standard five or six-year programs. The job

market was generally unaware of the change and critics predict that stand-alone BSc/BA diplomas will not be recognised as "real" university education in the next future, rendering the degree unnecessary and undesirable without further specialization. Some HEIs - like Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology or Moscow Engineering Physics Institute - have practiced a two-tier breakdown of their specialist programs for decades. They switched to Bologna process designations well in advance of the 2007 law, but an absolute majority of their students complete all six years of MSc/MA curriculum, regarding BSc/BA stage as useless in real life. Student mobility among universities has been traditionally discouraged and thus kept at very low level; there were no signs that formal acceptance of the Bologna Process would help students seeking better education (Guriev, 2007). Finally, while the five-year specialist training was previously free to all students, the new MSc/MA stage is not. The shift forces students to pay for what was free to the previous class; the cost is unavoidable again because the BSc/BA degree alone is considered useless. However, the defenders of the Bologna Process argued that the final years of the specialist program were formal and useless: academic schedules were relaxed and undemanding, allowing students to work elsewhere. Cutting the five-year specialist program to a four-year BSc/BA will not decrease the actual academic content of most of these programs (Guriev, 2007).

In all this institutional restructuration of the HE, which role do the teachers and the teacher training play? A striking feature of Russian public schools is that students' performance declines, as they get older. It seems that this phenomenon occurs because young people gradually lose interest in school and progressively lose the motivation to learn. This affects dramatically their success possibility of their further academic career. The motivation of students depends on many factors, but the key motivational factors are a specific interest to focus on and a feeling of self-efficacy. This means that motivation itself depends on access to resources and opportunities of self-expression and activation. Students experience of active participation tends to result in motivational change. Participation and motivation are to be seen as external and internal aspects of self-determination. Among other factors, educational content and educational technologies play an important role. In Russia, innovation has gradually taken place in both of these areas. What is still missing in order to encourage students' initiative and motivation to study is an effective teaching strategy. However, teachers in Russia are moving from a pedagogic approach based on "transmitting knowledge" to a strategy, which includes facilitating learning, supporting students and generating interest in learning. However, recent studies (...) have demonstrated that lecturing as a teaching strategy continues to

dominate, while active and individualized forms of learning are still not that common.

Educational policy have been often introduced under strict administrative regulations. This could explain why changes in the system are not internalized and why teacher-student interactions remain hierarchical rather than dialogical. In the hierarchical classroom teachers "transmit" knowledge rather than develop competencies. The achievements of Russian high school students reported by several international studies offer a clear evidence of the situation that cannot exchange at HE level. According to PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) and TIMSS (The International Math and Science Study) estimating knowledge and skills, Russian students score highly. This strongly confirms the dominance of transmissive pedagogic strategies. However, according to RISA (Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments) assessing competency level, Russia scored very low in 2000, 2003, 2006, and 2009. This reveals how far Russia underachieves where the efficiency of developing competencies is concerned, and that only a few changes, if any, have occurred in teacher-student interaction, in spite of the new educational standards, teacher re-training programs and quality assessment systems. According to Kuznetsova (2012), the modernization of Russian education has not fully realized due to the inertia of its old administrative regulation. The hierarchical system of orders and instructions still dominates and it takes a long time for a new culture and style of management to evolve in term of strategic thinking and collegial decision- making, individual responsibility and objective evaluation of the results. People are used to following orders, but not turning their ideas into action. Those who are concerned with following orders care mainly for control and reporting. Only those who translate their ideas into action are able to create new projects, explore new ways of doing things, probe, and innovate.

A new type of teacher could emerge along with the introduction of a management system, enabling him/her to revise and update educational content, to improve student-teacher interaction, and to develop new ways of thinking, acting, communicating, and collaborating as a teaching/learning community. Progress in the HE and in the educational system as a whole largely depends on the quality of the teachers, but this implies improving teachers' qualification levels, and providing them with economic support and a better social status.

The Modernization of Higher Education in China

In 1978, China started to implement policies in order to modernise the country and open it to the outside world. This was just two years after the death of Mao

Zedong and occurred under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping. These economic reforms, worldwide known as 'market socialism', started to reduce trade barriers, limited privatisation of industrial production, relaxing price controls, and liberalizing controls in coastal cities (cf. HART-LANDSBERG and BURKETT, 2010; cf. COFER and SOMERS, 2015, p. 100-101). The interest of foreign private investors for direct investment in China, the set in motion of a deep process of urbanization and the explosive increase of the average annual GDP and GDP per capital since reforms started to be implemented (cf. LEE and MALIN, 2009; COFER and SOMERS, 2015, p. 101; LI et al., 2008, p. 688; MIN, 2005; ZHENG et al., 2006) put an incredible pressure on the educational system, and arguably more specifically on HE. These economic improvements caused an expansion of a middle class, which asks for quality education for their children. Moreover, since the Chinese economy has become more manufacturing based, the demand increases for an educated workforce that can continuously improve productivity and adapt to current trends and technologies. Li et al. (2008, p. 688) affirm that:

most importantly, the classical Chinese notion that education is a consumer good has been replaced by a strong belief that education is an investment, a source of future income. What is more, individual living standards have also improved, together with expectations and aspirations. Individuals and families now want to invest in higher education as a means to secure both a higher income and status in society, and they can afford to do so. With the twin pressures of demand from both the labour market and from individuals and families, the Chinese higher education system has been compelled to expand.

Over the past 20 years the number of HEIs grew from 1045 in 1995 to 2491 in 2013, and consequently the number of undergraduate students from 2.9 million in 1995 to 24.6 million in 2013, and of postgraduate students from 145 thousand in 1995 to 1.8 million in 2013 (cf. NBSC, 2014; LIU and MORGAN, 2015, p. 1).

The public sector is by far the largest and divided into three tiers:

1. tier is formed by 39 top universities that were part of the '985 program' which aimed at creating Chinese world-class universities, which received extra resources and benefits;
2. tier encompass some 100 universities that were part of the '211 project' that specialise in some key areas considered to be a priority for the 21st century;
3. tier encompass the other public universities as well as some private universities that offer a four-year degree (cf. WANHUA, 2016, p. 457).

However, the high growth in the Chinese Higher Education system could only be achieved with the help of the private sector, which involved both the creation of private institutions and the development of public-private partnerships because the public sector could not meet the demand. This means that as part of those policies seeking to liberalise and transform China's social and economic spheres, two interrelated reforms were implemented in the Higher Education system, namely marketisation and decentralisation (COFER and SOMERS, 2015, p. 110). The intention with these strategies was to "introduce market forces to liberate education, create impetus for change, and encourage competition for improvement" (CAI and YAN, 2017, p. 169). Marketisation occurred on two fronts: 1. private HE institutions and 2. partnerships between private and public institutions.

However, Wanhua (2016, p. 458) notes that:

in China, private education is complicated in ownership, governance, and finance. Some institutions might be state-owned, but they are self-financed with student tuition and fees, or industry support. Some colleges are affiliated with public universities, and known as 'independent colleges'. These colleges were created early on by the public universities as branch campuses, a relationship which allows them to collect higher tuition and fees to subsidize the main campuses. Later, branch campuses were required to be separated from the mother institutions, so they became 'independent' and currently number 318.

Decentralisation happened through allowing regional governments to finance higher education. This has meant that since 1997, the central government allowed the implementation of a system, in which costs were divided up between central and regional governments as well as individuals (cf. COFER and SOMERS, 2015, p. 110; YANG, 2011). It is a fact that both Regional governments and Higher Education institutions have been granted more freedom and rights (cf. UNESCO, 2014, p. 5);

This has meant that there has been a push, at least in theory, for HEIs to be more autonomous, and that consequently they would have more say in teaching, recruitment, research and administration (UNESCO, 2014, p. 24). However, in a national survey with academics in over 200 universities, Wang (2000) reported that there was a certain degree of dissatisfaction with regards to decentralisation, and that more should be done about it; we quote:

autonomy was considered to be lacking in the other six areas identified in the survey. Specifically, many respondents believed that autonomy was lacking in student recruitment (70 per cent), academic programmes (66 per cent),

organizational structure (65 per cent), allocation of funds (57 per cent), promotion (55 per cent), income allocation (53 per cent), and recruitment of senior administrators and departmental heads (52 per cent). (UNESCO, 2014, p. 24).

The expansion of Higher Education in China has generated issues that some scholars criticize. Since 1999, the Higher Education system in China has consented the creation of affiliated colleges; that are partially owned and managed by the private sector but affiliated to a public university. They offer the status and level of educational provision of a public institution, but do so through an intake of students with lower entrance examination scores and high tuition fees. Consequently, some independent private universities start to face a problem with recruiting and investment in structure and research (cf. CAO and LEVY, 2015, p. 14). The second issue concerns the fact that students have increasingly been asked to pay for their education. In fact, the average tuition fee in Chinese HEIs is equivalent to the average annual urban, and twice the rural income (LIU and MORGAN, 2015, p. 1; cf. also WU and ZHENG, 2008). This has increased country's inequalities exacerbating the differences in access between the richer and more developed Eastern Coastal regions and the poorer and less industrialised Western-Inland Chinese regions. Student loans are granted through a system of subsidised government loans (i.e. the Government Subsidized Student Loans Scheme – GSSLS); however, the poorer strata of the population are reluctant to take loans for cultural reasons (JOHNSTONE, ARORA and EXPERTON, 1998; CF. COFER and SOMERS, 2015, p. 111). At the heart of this problem is the issue of an urban-rural divide in Chinese society. This divide had an impact on gender issues as women in rural areas still face great challenges to further their education (cf. COFER and SOMERS, 2015, p. 109-110).

Scholars have criticized China's rigorous examination-oriented education and reform attempts have been numerous and varied but the examination-oriented "regular system" has proven remarkably resilient. Reforms have attempted to broaden educational aims to focus on developing well-rounded individuals rather than only memorisation and examination scores. In so doing, China looks for inspiration to the education reform discourse of leading Asian nations such as Japan, South Korea and Singapore. Contemporary Western education is also a model with teaching approaches based on methodology such as learning by doing and student centred learning. The ultimate goal of the reform effort is to bring about changes in the educational setting and consequently to improve teaching and learning for large numbers of students fostering productive classroom discourse. Among the few empirical studies in China that investigated the impact of the new curriculum, Yu (2003) found that teaching practice in the reform classrooms became more varied and included more active participation

by students. Classroom teaching included a range of activities such as obtaining knowledge through reading, exploration, reflection, observation, manipulation, and questioning. Ma (2005) conducted a survey in reform classrooms and found that the students were encouraged to state their views, explain their ideas, and respond to the ideas of their classmates. On the other hand, the studies also found that teachers were having significant problems teaching effectively using the new reform approach. For instance, 'classroom discussion' was sometimes little more than teacher-centered question-and-answer sessions, where teachers were inclined to pressure students to agree with them. 'Self-directed' learning often became situations where some teachers permitted students to do whatever they liked, without guidance, feedback or requirements. 'Group work' was sometimes ineffective, particularly when teachers assigned students to groups for discussion of questions regardless of the difficulty or value of these questions and without purpose, conditions, time limits, or guidance from the teachers (Yu, 2003). There was also a tendency to concentrate on the textbook rather than the standards defined by the curriculum (Shan, 2002). These observations highlight the inherent problems associated with attempts to mechanically apply teaching methodologies without the philosophical intent of the prescribed curriculum goals.

Conclusion

In this part of report, we focused on Russia and China, discussing recent developments in their respective Higher Educational systems. Russia and China have made many efforts to expand their Higher Education in terms of access, provision and quality of research. Both countries have universities in the top 100 world leading university rankings. However, these development were not connected to a deep improvement of the teachers' training, neglecting that they are the real driving force of any educational change.

Between expectations and reality: teacher professionalism in the knowledge society.

Since education has become the catalyst for the future economic development and social cohesion, in all countries there has been renewed interest and discussion about the role teachers play in preparing students for a life in knowledge societies, which are characterized by uncertainty especially regarding the labor market. Teachers, it is contended in many countries, have to be upgraded in their professionalism (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2011).

If society's concern is to improve quality in education and to foster creative, enterprising, innovative, self-reliant young people, with the capacity and

motivation to go on as lifelong learners, then this will not happen unless the corps of teachers are themselves challenging, innovative and lifelong learners (Coolahan, 2002, p. 14).

Today "teachers are confronted by increasingly complex challenges" (Figel, 2005, p. 7) as they educate in complex societies and encounter students with more and more uneven resources, skills and cultural background. At the same time, the discourse of knowledge society implies a learning society, as the pace of knowledge generation and adoption is so fast that learning could not be limited to the youth year.

The last "Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications" (EU Commission 2010) illustrate some new trends in teacher education and profession, which are inspired by discourses and major features of the knowledge society. In the document, the key competences teachers have to achieve are clustered under three macro-categories (ibid. p. 3-4):

1. Work with others: working with students as individuals, supporting them to develop into active members of society, developing cooperative competences and activities, which increase the collective intelligence of learners, and collaborating with colleagues to enhance their own professionalism.
2. Work with knowledge, technology and information: operating with different kinds of knowledge, being able to access, process, reflect on and transmit knowledge, using ICT tools and insights.
3. Work with and in society: preparing student to be socially responsible and enhancing intercultural respect and understanding. Teachers need to be aware of what adds to social cohesion or, on the other hand, exclusion in society, taking into account the ethical dimensions of learning and networking with other educational providers such as community and representative stakeholders.

Most important, teachers are expected to instill in their students motivation for developing an autonomous learning biography that is realizing that learning as ability and challenge is a lifelong process, which does not end with higher education and is not limited to academic environment. This implies encouraging and teaching self-directed (meta-cognitive) learning skills (learning how to learn) and attitudes by establishing a teaching-learning setting that is recognizing individual learner differences, and is favorable to an effective teacher-learner relationship (Scott et al., 1996). In order to do that, teachers need to constantly updating subject knowledge and be open to use new didactics and tools. Furthermore, they are also expected to be ready to acquire knowledge about

broader societal realms, including the concrete life worlds of contemporary young adults (Lima & Guimares, 2011; EU Commission, 2010), in other words become those “challenging, innovative and lifelong learners” (Coolahan, 2002, p. 14) we mentioned before.

Homogeneous middle class student classrooms are the exception rather than the rule these days. Therefore teachers are required to adopt in their praxis an approach that is intercultural in its broader sense, reflecting the multifaceted needs of all their students, discovering who young people are and understanding the reasons behind their actions and behaviors, which might be cultural rather than purely individual (Crul et al., 2012). In multicultural nowadays societies, to be taught and learnt has to be the importance of pro-active social and communicative skills, enabling students to dialogically de-constructing stereotypes and prejudices menacing social cohesion.

What is most important here is to transmit an attitude of reflexivity enhancing students’ chances to learn how to shape and reshape their learning processes, adapting their educational paths to changes on the labor market, looking for new opportunities and challenges and taking autonomous decisions about their academic or vocational abilities and desires (Diepstraten et al., 2006; Cuconato, 2011). This implies that teachers themselves should adopt a reflexive approach in their profession in order to be aware of the implicit attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge that guide their daily activity with the aim of constantly shape and reshape their practice adapting it to the changing students’ needs. As argued by Diamond and Mullen, reflecting on the professional development for post-modern educators:

Teachers can each learn to be scholars of their own consciousness and experts in the remodeling of their experiencing of the experience of teaching" (Diamond & Mullen, 1999. p. 123).

Presently, teaching staff are in need to develop sustainable networks within and outside university in order to master their tasks. The academia – and the teacher in the classroom – is no longer a closed universe but potentially an open space for combining knowledge of various sources and resources, cooperating with out of school professionals, teacher training colleges, municipalities and local labor markets for in-service places for students in preparation of their future vocations and professions.

Considering all these changes concerning their profession, an important strand in recent research on teacher professionalization regards reforms and changes in teacher training. There is, in principal, agreement about the necessity to better

equip future teachers for their work in university. Of great importance in this context is to learn how to support students at the most crucial points in their academic career, that is to say, developing in the same time their attitude as lifelong learners.

Such awareness would have to be cultivated in teachers already during their training periods at teacher colleges. In a recent European Project (GOETE project, 2012-2015) regarding teacher training, we asked teacher trainers about that issue and analyzed the curricula in search of knowledge transfer to teacher students about social and youth sociological development as well as counseling requirements in contemporary society – and more specifically in their respective countries. Such larger knowledge about what it means to live and work in knowledge societies exists in teacher training only to a limited extent and is not regarded as an essential part of their professionalization. From that research, it emerged that most teacher training curricula foresee none or only sparse courses about macro problems such as globalization, lifelong and life-wide learning, non-formal in relation to formal education, and changes on local and global labor markets and in vocations and professions affecting young peoples' future prospects.

Questionnaire's result

The level of teaching effectiveness is a question that plagues higher education for a number of decades. Braskamp, and Ory (1994) and Centra (1993) defines effective teaching as "that which produces beneficial and purposeful student learning through the use of appropriate procedures". This is an aspect that this part of the report is seeking to address in the case of Russian and Chinese teachers, who are institutionally required to shift from a teacher-centered to a student-centered Higher Education System. Traditionally, formal education was organized and managed in ways that work well for organizational operations, but that did not reflect the most effective ways to make students the active learners, needed by the knowledge society. It's far more manageable - from an institutional perspective - if all students are taught in classrooms under the supervision of teachers, if they are given a fixed set of course options to choose from, if they all use the same textbooks and learning resources, or if their education unfolds according to a predetermined educational transition's step. However, supporters of student-centered learning believe that students' learning is the primary objective of education and therefore educational settings should be designed to enhance student learning, not improve organizational efficiency.

Dating back to the 1930s, it were American educationalists, who used a first the concepts teacher-centered and student-centered to describe the two distinct

approaches to the teaching/learning process. Teacher-centered typically refers to learning situations in which teachers assert control over the material that students study and the ways in which they study it. They are the most active persons in the room and do most of lecturing, demonstrating concepts, reading aloud, or issuing instructions, while students spend most of their time sitting in desks, listening, taking notes, giving brief answers to questions that the teacher asks, or completing assignments and tests. In addition, in these settings, teachers teach students in ways that are easy, familiar, or personally preferred, but that might not work well for all students.

In contrast, student-centered typically refers to forms of teaching/learning process that give students opportunities to lead learning activities, participate more actively in discussions, design their own learning projects, explore topics that interest them, and generally contribute to the design of their own course of study. Furthermore, this approach is often associated with educational setting that feature desks arranged in circles or small groups (rather than rows of desks that face the teacher), with self-guided or self-paced learning, or with non-formal or informal learning experiences taking place outside the traditional formal settings (internships, apprenticeships, independent research projects, online classes, travel experiences, and community-service projects). To react to the criticisation of student-centered learning as a fuzzy concept that refers to a vague assortment of teaching strategies, or that means different things to different educators, in recent years some education reformers and researchers have sought to define the term with greater precision. While the definition of the term is still evolving, the supporter of student-centered learning tend to emphasize a few fundamental characteristics:

1. Teaching/ learning process need to be individualized, addressing the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students;
2. Students advance in their education, when they demonstrate to have learned the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn. Students should have the flexibility to learn anytime and anywhere, meaning that their learning can take non-formal and informal place outside of formal setting, such as through work-study programs or online courses;
3. Students should be given opportunities to make choices about their own learning and contribute to the design of learning experiences.

Teachers have not an easy task in implementing these principles: What does imply put students at the heart of the teaching/learning process? Which instruments are more pervasive in the learning practice? Which tools are

employed? These are the main research questions we attempt to answer, grounding on the analysis of 57 teachers who are different concerning the age ranging from 24 to 65 years old, nationality, and gender.

In the questionnaire, we proposed a series of the most common teaching practices and we asked them to make a cross on the three main elements that they use in their profession:

1. Student-centered approach;
2. situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991) that uses real-life situations as the basis of learning activities and, especially, in developing professional competence;
3. interactive process of knowledge construction and skill development (Serdyukov and Ryan, 2008);
4. immediate application of new knowledge in authentic situations in the class and real life, and gaining practical outcomes of the course;
5. high level of intrinsic motivation developed and constantly supported through emotional involvement of each student in team work and learning process;
6. continuous active communication, collaboration, and cooperation among students in various small- and big-group activities;
7. systemic use of ET in classroom and homework both for content acquisition and skill development, for communication and collaboration, and for maintaining students' high level of cognitive, physical, and emotional state;
8. specific structure and organization of the course and its content for consistent, "whole" student experience;
9. effective content presentation in various formats and modalities;
10. suggestive, supportive, and efficient teaching style incorporating incessant involvement with the class; immediate, objective, and stimulating feedback; continuous student support.

The table below illustrate the self-evaluation of the teachers regarding their everyday practices.

Not surprisingly, the teaching practices that scored higher among our teachers are the student-centered approach (16%) the development of high level of intrinsic motivation (16%) and the situated learning (11%) and all concepts that are the heart of the recent reforms of the Chinese and Russian HE and underlined explicitly in the reform laws. Student-centered learning represents an "umbrella" concept encompassing a wide variety of potential educational strategies and academic programs. It refers to a wide variety of learning

experiences, instructional approaches, and academic-support strategies aiming at addressing distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students and groups of students, which were indicated in the questionnaire in order to further deepen the more general concept of student-centered approach situated learning and motivation's development. To reach the goals of the more general concept, teachers are expected to use wide a variety of educational tools, ranging from modifying assignments and instructional strategies in the classroom to entirely redesigning the ways in which students are grouped and taught. However, activities that are supposed to trigger motivation score significantly less: The systemic use of ET in classroom and homework is indicated only by 5% of the respondents; the same percentage reached by the activity of continuous student support. The specific structure and organization of the course and its content for consistent, "whole" student experience scores slightly better (6%) together with effective content presentation in various formats and modalities (6%). However, immediate application of new knowledge in authentic situations in the class and real life (10%) and continuous active communication, collaboration, and cooperation among students in small- and big-group activities (9%) indicates the attempt of a good share of teachers to move from a knowledge to a competence based teaching process, activating at the same time their students in order to make them more aware of their learning acquisition (meta-competences).

The second part of our questionnaire consists in a set of open questions regarding the most important teaching task, that is: course planning, implementation, evaluation. As an overall impression we should state that the answers are very much different both in term of content and English language style. The ENTEP countries' approaches to education and youth vary significantly, depending on the different historical and political realities they have faced: from the post-communist landscape of Russia and China, to the more consolidated institutions of England, Italy and Portugal. Therefore, education and discourse on youth could assume different meanings, connotations and contents. In analyzing the questionnaire, at the very initial stage, we cannot be sure that it exists a direct correspondence between the Western and the Eastern educational conceptualization. Furthermore, ENTEP uses English as vehicular language and is well known local English varieties of the participant could have biased the analysis.

Emerging problem and questions in course planning

Course planning is a significant component of teaching. Though often invisible to students, thorough preparation is the most critical factor in classroom success as

it implies to anticipate "creatively" the needs and expectations of students who teachers have not met yet. Planning consists of several steps first of all it requires establishing learning goals and selecting a variety of strategies, learning material, time and special setting to support them. After that, teacher should decide how and when to assess student learning outcomes and detailing the plan in an effective syllabus, well aware that a plan is a guide, but real students should take advantages of it. A young female Russian teacher (28 years old) affirms instead in a sort of methodological contradiction that

"There are not significant changes in my planning every year. With new students' groups, we learn the same themes, and in this case I only change some additional exercises and its number - depending on students' success or problems. That is why my plan made in the beginning of the course is not constant. I redefine some material presentation ways, exercises for home work."

Instead a more experienced (Russian) teacher, female, 41 years old expresses a great commitment with their student need and desire.

"I usually follow a model to plan my lessons. I take into account a necessary amount of time that I need for each topic and activity, abilities of my students as well as equipment in the classroom. I also think how to engage students in the learning process and to increase their interest. By setting the goals of my teaching course, I should know state and local standards or curriculum documents but I also need to specify them according to the needs and skills of my students. I discuss the learning objectives to students and try to connect them with previous and future learning. It is important to encourage my students setting their personal learning objectives and to pay attention to their pre-knowledge to make the learning process more effective. Every year I change the planning trying to satisfy the current needs of my students. Sometimes I can correct the planning during the course if there is such a necessity."

Concerning the planning activity, most teachers highlight as very difficult to find a proper balance between a students' "entertaining", engaging, activating as well as informative program about a subject that is central to all of them, balancing at the same time the cognitive ability and interest of each student and the ratio of time and amount of learning materials.

According to many teachers, this is due to the many administrative restrictions they get in the implementation of their activity. Many affirms they could not adapt new methods to traditional settings as they lack specific equipment for practical classes and have not the professional equipment to promote an inclusive didactic The rapid pace, at which technologies develop, increases the

need to intensify the supply of material in the classroom. Teachers also meet technical problems, concerning the difficult planning templates and the use technology and software.

Others, instead, underline problematic to cope with the different levels of the student's initial knowledge and heterogeneous classroom. From this situation, their difficulty in engaging students also due to the lack of time. This problem regards teacher of both countries and is a well-known discourse in the multicultural Western educational community.

Some respondents, mainly Russian young teachers both male and female articulated very well the dilemma of planning between ministerial top-down curricula and the need of young people:

"At the stage of course planning I devote much time to define the direction of teaching taking into account the latest priorities set by the Ministry of Education and global teaching trends. As for me, the main point is to plan the course flexible and "youth-friendly" enough to let my students delve into the learning process as deep as possible" (R-Teacher, male, 25 y.o)

Anyway, they swing between their institutional role of educational stakeholder and supporter of students' academic trajectories. This is particularly evident in the words of a young enthusiastic Chinese young female teacher (33 y.o.), who affirms that "….for achieving my teaching goals, I will be a friend, a listener, an elder sister with students and I will ask them to do team work and do some activities together after class to improve our relationship".

More experienced (Russian), female teacher, who has been trained in Europe and USA seems well aware of the need to tailor the course on the real student facing her.

"When planning my lessons I take into account the specifics of the course, requirements of the Federal education standard as well as my experience acquired during academic training in Europe and the US. My planning considers a number of elements such as space, time span, tools and resources. Goal-setting depends largely on the competences provided by the Federal education standard. I usually take the students' pre-knowledge in my planning. Background allows to make teaching and learning more efficient. The course outline remains the same through time but I may change the planning every year in accordance with the students' background and conditions of teaching. I plan both at the beginning and during the course adding to the general outline the specifics dependent on the teaching"(R-teacher female 39).

An interesting need regarding more team working in the planning phase is expressed, similarly to some others teachers, by a Chinese female teacher (46 y.o.)

“However, limited by objective or subjective reasons, teachers have not made so adequate and effective communication and cooperation in course planning as well to meet students’ demands. There are still a lot of things need to be done to strength the cooperation with colleagues in course planning”.

Emerging problem and questions in implementation

In order to match practice to purpose, teachers are required to select classroom activities and learning strategies that will help students achieve their learning objectives. This could be done integrating a variety of teaching strategies to foster learning through several modes of information process real-world problem solving. An interactive learning community is the necessary prerequisite to instill motivation in students. Research finding shows that student who perceive more support from adults and students peers who share time with them in the educational develop more positive attitudes and academic values and feel more satisfaction with their learning path (Akey, 2006). Reflecting on his own role, a Chinese male teacher (42 y.o.) affirms that

“In my teaching process, my biggest problem is how to arouse students' initiative in autonomous learning. How to make them want to learn, not because teachers want them to learn? That means how to make study from learning task with which they have to deal to lerning object they strive for”.

Concerning this topic most teacher express a deep concern about the behaviour of students, who rarely asked questions or expressed doubt about other students’ responses or the teacher's response. The blame the lack of divergent thinking, the missing development of critical thinking as well as poor organization of language, to name just a few. However, these observations seem to indicate that the nature of student responses is often shaped by the nature of the teachers’ questions. How teachers ask questions will determine the level of participation he/she get from students. There are two kinds of questions: closed and open. Closed questions check whether students have learned or remembered specific information. They require a factual answer and leave little or no room for discussion or dissent. The answer is either correct or incorrect. Closed questions are important for students, but it is also important that your questioning activities do not stay entirely within the closed question areas. Open-ended questions, on the other hand, require more complex responses and can stimulate lively class discussion because they give students opportunities to

express ideas, draw inferences, and contribute their own opinions. They draw on the students' past experiences, but also cause students to give the reasons for these opinions, to infer or identify implications, to formulate hypotheses, or to make judgments based on their own values and standards.

Moreover, the passive tendency of students has also been established throughout their years of learning, both in and out of Russian and Chinese classrooms. Such entrenched behavior makes it difficult for the students to adapt to the changes required by more interactive teaching/learning practice, they even "fear" of participating in the classroom discussion and show low level of readiness for project work. According especially to Chinese teachers, new social and personal media, are contributing to the growing learning apathy of students.

Nowadays, mobile phones are so essential that it is inevitable that students use phones. What really upsets me is they just waste their time in playing games or watching videos. They would not consciously use phones in learning, but just for entertainment, even sometimes I required" (Ch-Teacher, female, 50 y.o.).

In a more severe mood a Chinese teacher, (65 y.o) complains that:

"I frequently encourage my students to study hard. But sometimes I was upset by a few students who do not work hard and always play games on computers late at night or early in the morning."

In the reform context, a student has the responsibility to express his/her interest, ideas and questioning. For the students, this is a radical change. One of the difficulties that a teacher has to overcome in creating an interactive classroom is not to return to the way of teacher-centered instruction. This may occur when changes in teaching practice are met with resistance from the passive tendency of students. The challenge for teachers is to find ways to enable students to become active participants in learning. In this direction a 25 years old Russian male teacher reports the

"We use digital tools to help students get their hands in the modern world. We use problem-based learning techniques and cases to make them feel at ease in all situations. I emphasise the non-formal learning techniques in the educational process since these methods allow students go beyond the frames and clichés. I always pay attention to the "teacher-students" and "student-student" relationships by applying cooperative and communicative learning methods"

In the same vein, a 28 years old, female Russian teacher recognizes that

"Student who feels a strong personal connection to her teacher, talks with her teacher frequently, and receives more constructive guidance and praise rather than just criticism from her teacher. The student is likely to trust her teacher more, show more engagement in learning, behave better in class and achieve at higher levels academically"

Most teachers, as they did in the questions regarding the planning phase, remark the lack of pre- basic knowledge and motivation among students. Some teachers are well aware that this depends from the very different school background of students:

"The most common problem I encounter in teaching activities is that I can't take every student into consideration. Since the students come to different places, there may be differences in the learning basis or learning methods, which will lead me to fail to take all of them into consideration" (Ch-teacher, female, 27)

Only one teacher take into account the existing educational divide between students coming from urban and those coming from rural areas:

According to my experience, the urban students' language ability is usually better than the rural students' even though there are some exceptional situations. The students with lower language ability should be kept an eye on and deserve to be paid more time and energy through different way such as special individual instruction, tailor made assignments in order to help them keep up with other students (Ch-teacher, female 42).

Another hot topic emerging from the questionnaire's is the lower rate to the questions regarding inclusive education, showing teachers' missing awareness of a topic that represents a cornerstone of the EHEA and should be promote in order to avoid what Valeeva states concerning the Russian modern educational system:

"Children with special educational needs, disabled children are often isolated from their healthy peers and drop out of the total educational process. And it is in a mainstream school that a child with disabilities not only gets academic knowledge, but might feel the fullness and complexity of life in a society, so it's here that he can socialize (Vaaleva, 2015, p 2013).

This consideration shade light on the approach to inclusive education described by one Russian teacher,

"I never faced with students with learning disabilities. For student with learning disorders I have several additional homework, which could compensate their absence in the class" (R-teacher, female, 54 y.o)

Other shortcoming highlighted by teachers are more concrete and regard the administrative restrictions and the weak flexibility of working programs to the changing environment. Teaching materials are not updated and there is a deficiency of tools as digital technologies in the classrooms, as many of them are not equipped with necessary IT facilities

Emerging problem and questions in evaluation

Evaluating student learning takes time and effort, but well-designed tests and consistent grading procedures provide students with valuable information about what and how they are learning. Providing timely, effective feedback helps students learn better, improve performance, and develop cognitive skills. Teachers need to learn how to construct assessment tools that measure and reinforce student learning; and develop clear and fair grading practices.

The respondent teachers confirms that the rationality of evaluation criteria need to be further scientifically improved and express some doubt on final examination:

“evaluation makes a big influence on many students and they have bad marks after it, but they were great during the course. And the third, that is most incomprehensible – what rate the student deserve.” (Rteacher, male 25).

Another doubt committing teacher is exemplary expressed in these questions:

“The main problem in evaluating the progress is the following: how should I evaluate the students with different level of knowledge? Who deserves a better mark: a student with a better level of English (but he had a good level when he started a course) or a student who had a lower level at the beginning but has made a greater progress?” (R-teacher, female 35).

Also concerning the formative asset, teachers admit that the main problem in getting feedback is that some students "do not have own opinion" and have a low level of learning organisation resulting in high levels of activity and low results. Many teachers blame students for their attempts to reach better results in dishonest ways and the delay in delivery of their learning projects.

In counter-tendency, a Chinese teacher, male, 42 y.o. affirms that

“I personally think that the students' learning process and attitude are the key to the assessment of the students. I often say to my students, "attitude is the first productivity of study." Therefore, in addition to the volume fraction of the final examination, the class notes, the course papers and the number of students' questions are the tools to evaluate the students' learning effect”.

Other teachers simple arrange to sit their student for a mid-term and a final exam every semester. Most teacher lament the lack of tools to evaluate the teaching process and prepare the evaluation tests taking into account the different skills of students. Furthermore, they argue that teaching effect, especially the thinking ability, needs to be tested for a longer time, including even the performance of students' specific work after graduation.

A best practice to reflect on and implement : Students Centered Learning

Over the past years, the concept of Students Centered Learning (SCL) has become central in the policy discourse on higher education. Both at European level and in national plan for higher education and institutional strategies is expressed the need to implement it. SCL is not among the thematic areas that have been tackled directly in the Bologna Process from the onset. However, many of the priority work plan themes discussed early on in the Bologna Process tackled aspects that helped make learner-centred education more of a reality. This included flexibility tools such as ECTS, mobility, improved recognition, qualification frameworks and others. After first committing to the full implementation of SCL at the Ministerial Conference in Leuven in 2009, EHEA ministers reiterated their commitment to SCL in the Bucharest Communiqué (2012). Ministers agreed to

Establish conditions that foster student-centred learning, innovative teaching methods and a supportive and inspiring working and learning environment, while continuing to involve students and staff in governance structures at all levels". Bologna tools also support the implementation of SCL through providing more choices for students, mobility opportunities and extracurricular activities.

In 2012, the importance of SCL and learning-outcomes based learning was reiterated in the Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué and the European Commission's Communication on Rethinking education. That same year, the Bologna Follow-Up Group developed its working agenda with a specific focus on improving the social dimension in education through studentcenteredness in teaching.

SCL builds up on the successful implementation of Bologna tools, such as recognition procedures and ECTS based on learning outcomes (LO). LO represents the core conceptual basis for a student-centred higher education system. It defines in terms of a statement what a learner is expected to know, understand, and be able to do at the end of a learning process. It should not refer to input criteria, such as what exactly is taught or the mode of teaching.

During the learning activity, the student acquires those learning outcomes with the teacher acting as a facilitator of the learning process, “enabling” not “telling”.

The European Student Union (Patricolo, 2016) believes that learning outcomes should accommodate the multiple purposes of higher education. This includes preparing students for active citizenship, creating a broad, advanced knowledge base and stimulating research and innovation.

Current quality assurance mechanisms highlight the importance of teaching (interaction between teacher and student, students as co-producers of knowledge and members of the academic community curricula design with respect to learning outcomes). However, it must be said that research activity is rewarded significantly more than excellence in teaching, and there are fewer incentives for academic staff to invest in development of their teaching skills, employ new methods of teaching and assessment, such as problem-based learning and project-based activities. Teachers are not challenged to encourage students to take a more active role in designing their learning path, take advantage of collaborative learning methods and develop critical thinking through challenging established knowledge.

However, what does imply putting students at the heart of the teaching/learning process? From 2009 to 2010, the T4SCL international project (Teachers for Student Centred Learning), was financed in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme in order to map out what this concept means, and what would be required in terms of policy. It was aimed at establishing a common understanding by providing a common comprehensive definition, as well as guidelines and checklists for its implementation of the concept (Time for Student-Centred Learning, Koen Geven & Angele Attard, 2010). Peer Assessment of Student-Centred Learning (PASCL), funded with the support of the European Commission in October 2013 re-evaluate the progress of implementation of SCL, highlight best practices and establish peer assessment procedures for the implementation of the concept in European higher education institutions.

As a result, the following nine general principles inspiring SCL was created:

1. SCL requires an on-going Reflexive Process

A SCL style cannot remain applicable in a context through time. Teachers, students and institutions need to steadily reflect on their teaching/learning process and infrastructural systems in order to continuously improve the learning experience of students and ensure that the intended learning outcomes are achieved in a way that stimulates learners' critical thinking and transferable skills.

2. SCL does not have a “One-Size-Fits-All” Solution

A key concept underlying SCL is the awareness that all HEIs institutions are different, all teachers are different and all students are different. All of them act in very diverse contexts and deal with different subject-disciplines. Therefore, SCL is a learning approach that requires learning support structures, which are appropriate to each given context, and teaching and learning styles appropriate to those undertaking them.

3. Students have Different Learning Styles

SCL recognises that students have different pedagogical needs. Some learn better through trial and error, others learn through practical experience. For some learners much is learned by reading literature, others need to debate and discuss theory in order to understand it.

4. Students have Different Needs and Interests

All students have needs and interest outside the classroom. Some are interested in cultural activities, others in sports or in representative organisations. Students can have children or can be faced with psychological conditions, illness or disability.

5. Choice is Central to Effective Learning in SCL

Students like to learn different things and hence any offer should involve an amount of free choice. Learning can be organised in liberal formats, such as at colleges of liberal arts or choice can be offered in a more traditional, disciplinary style.

6. Students have Different Experiences and Background Knowledge

Learning needs to be adapted to the life and personal prior learning experience (non formal and informal learning) of the student. Personal experience can be also used to motivate students, for instance, by allowing students to share a personal story to illustrate a point.

7. Students should have Control over their Learning

Students need to be as active partners having a stake in the way that higher education functions. Engaging students themselves in how their learning should be shaped represents the best way to ensure that learning focuses more on students is by

8. SCL is about Enabling not Telling

When teachers impart facts and knowledge to students (telling), the initiative, preparation and content comes mainly from them. The SCL approach aims to give students greater responsibility enabling them to think critically, process, analyse, synthesise, criticise, apply, solve problems and make decision.

9. Learning needs Cooperation between Students and Staff

It is important that students and staff co-operate to develop a shared understanding both of the problems experienced in learning, as well as their problems as stakeholders within their given institution, jointly proposing solutions that might work for both groups. In the classroom, such cooperation will have a positive effect as the two groups increasingly come to consider each other as partners. Such a partnership is central to the philosophy of SCL, which considers learning as a co-construction of teachers and students. (Todorovski, Nordal, E., Isoki, T., 2015, pp. 5-7)

These nine principle inspire the content of the workable definition of SCL:

Student-Centred Learning represents both a mindset and a culture within a given HEIs institution and is a learning approach which is broadly related to, and supported by, constructivist theories of learning. It is characterised by innovative methods of teaching which aim to promote learning in communication with teachers and other learners and which take students seriously as active participants in their own learning, fostering transferable skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking and reflective thinking.

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