

Service-structure of the University of Miskolc encouraging students' competitiveness at the labour market

Mária Illés-Kovács - Mariann Somosi Veres

PhD Associate Professor, Dean – PhD Associate Professor Head of Institute, vice-dean
bolmari@uni-miskolc.hu – szvsm@uni-miskolc.hu

Abstract: The North-Hungarian region with its disadvantageous service structure, human resources with very low qualifications, high unemployment and an extremely high-pitched migration weakening the intelligentsia belong to the most poverty-stricken regions of the EU.

In the first two decades of the political transformation, the region found itself among the regions lagging behind and its youth stood fewer chances concerning both education and finding jobs. That is why talent-care has a decisive role in increasing the students' chances and lessening their disadvantages. The traditional approaches and methods of talent-care like TDK (Professional Competition of Students' Papers on Science) are no more sufficient, in the increasingly competitive atmosphere the students' professional and cultural-psychological competencies have to be encouraged together, which requires talent-care tailor cut for the students' personal needs assisted by the institutional background.

One of largest problems of today's higher education in Hungary is that it does not sufficiently focus on the training of the competencies required at the workplaces during the academic training period. However, their ongoing development increases job finding opportunities, raises labour-market values of the students so enhancing the fame and acceptance of the institution.

In the framework of an EU project we have outlined an institutional module incorporating student-integration, talent-care and competence-evaluation at different academic levels and fields. With the present paper we wish to demonstrate the novelty and special methodological approaches of the module in practice with lots of examples from real life to prove its feasibility.

Keywords: students, competitiveness, labour market, education, academic training, student integration, talent care, competence evaluation, Hungary

The North Hungarian region, according to the integrated indexes, is one of the underdeveloped regions of the country, despite the fact that there are great differences between the micro-regions of North Hungary. The economic fallback since 2005 seemed to be decreasing, the competitiveness raised but the beginning of the crisis changed this tendency. The region and the county is one of the poorest areas in the European Union, with its unfavorable production and service structure, with high unemployment rate, unqualified workforce, and with a high rate of wandering which weakens the group of intelligentsia. The EU defined and stands for the idea that education has its essential role in the personal and social development. In the first two decades of the transition the North Hungarian region became one of the underdeveloped area of Hungary, according to this the youth of this region had log chance in the education and in the employment. Because of that talent support has a great role in raising the chances and decreasing the disadvantageous ground of the students. The methods and forums of talent support are not satisfactory anymore. At the dynamic competition of the tertiary education institutes, we must empower the professional and cultural psychic competences of the students, which needs institutionally assisted tailor-made talent support. The mass education challenges the universities with the problems of the learning methods and development programs. At the same time sketchy professional knowledge must be refilled (which should be learned at the high school), liberal education must be taught, students must be taught for the basic lifestyle of intelligentsia, and of course the curriculum of the university must taught as well. The courses are inadequate for filling the gaps of knowledge. One of the biggest problems of the Hungarian

educational system is that it does not pay attention on the expansion of competences needed at the labor market during the training time. Continuous training could raise the chances of finding a job, the value of the students on the labor market. By this the appreciation and acceptance of the university could get better too. As a partner of an EU project, we develop an institutional module, which integrates knowledge development, talent support, the competence estimation on the different levels and fields of tertiary education. In the presentation we would like to show methodology and adaptability of this new module based on factual examples.

The Hungarian education system has changed in the recent decades significantly. The ideas and elements were not built on each other deliberately; moreover they were in many cases contradictory.

The quality of the primary and secondary education is declining with an accelerating trend:

- Due to the work of the exhausted teachers uniformed education with a decreasing quality became a tendency
- Twenty years ago, the teaching methodologies and themes have become obsolete.
- Today, it is no longer an attractive career to be a teacher is, the less prepared choose these courses.

A mercenary spirit settled on the publishing of course books and textbooks and on the educational system as well. Students are not trained to acquire portable knowledge, but on the knowledge that is rapidly depreciating, so it is not surprising that, year after year the knowledge of the freshmen is getting worse. The biggest problems are perceptible by natural science - particularly in mathematics, physics and chemistry. The national measurements show that the freshmen at courses of science and technology don't even know the half of the curriculum of the high school in the fields chemistry and physics. This trend is also in the field of humanities. There are serious knowledge gaps in literacy, general knowledge, spelling, knowledge of the subjects of the high school. For example ten years ago only the students with excellent results (A) won admission to the Eötvös Lóránd University and in 2008 students could win admission with mediocre (C) results. Thus, the knowledge of incoming students has decreased dramatically.

The Hungarian higher education wasn't left intact. The changes below came into life as a part of a campaign:

- Mass education
- Institutional consolidation;
- Normative financing;
- Bologna-type training and
- Changes in entrance examination

Due to the effects the quality of the Hungarian tertiary education decreased considerably. The value of the Hungarian diplomas varies in a wide range and some of them are not competitive and non-genuine anymore. The structure of the courses – due to the bologna-system- dissected and became disproportionate. The qualities of the courses are not verified.

The bigger part of the tertiary education, either in Hungary or abroad, functions in a strangulated way in point of view of the sender and receiver institutes. The managing and financing structure of the institutional system of the tertiary education don't moderate but amplifies the problems.

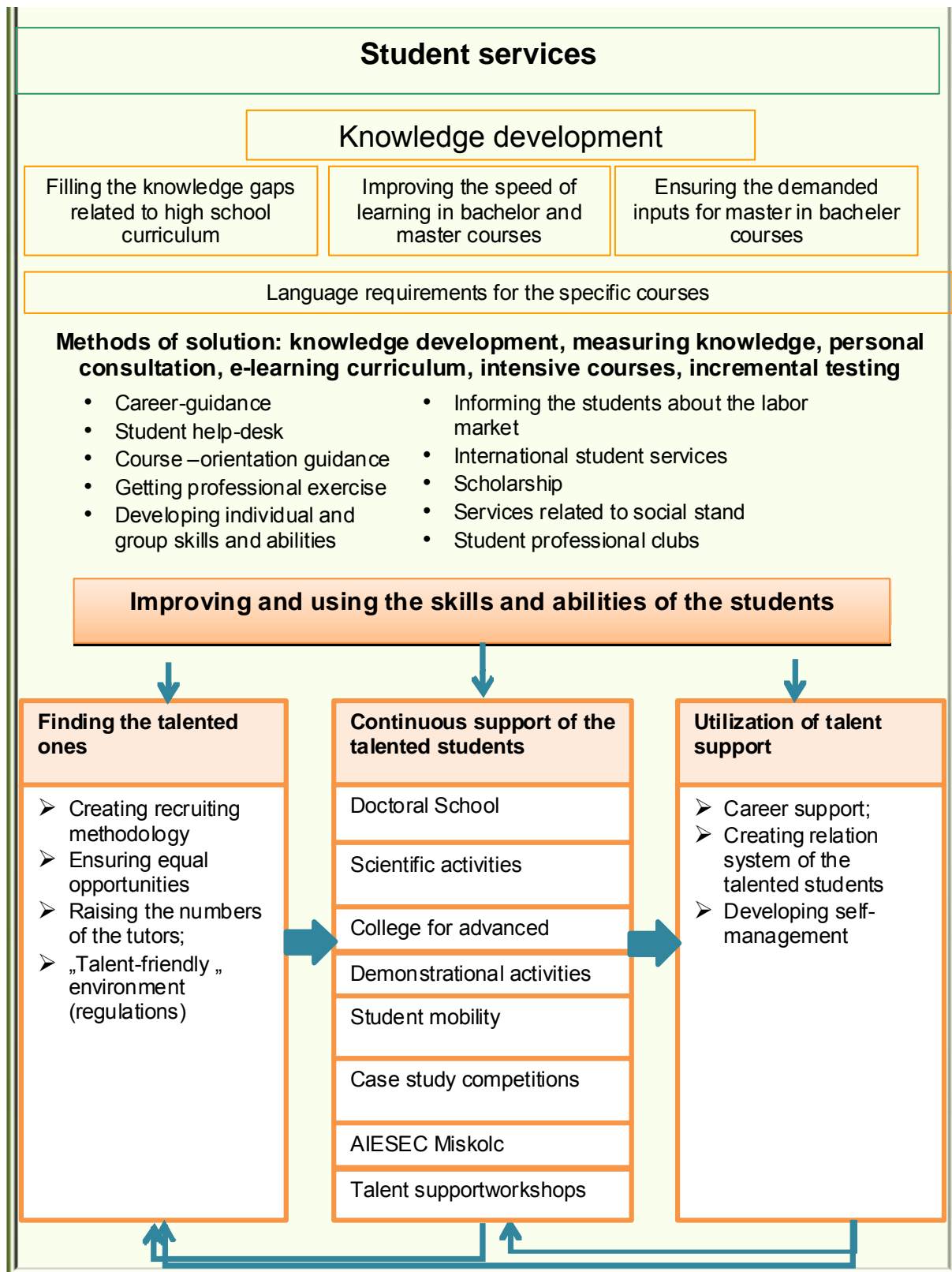


Figure 1.: Student services at the University of Miskolc

First of all, we summarize the services of the University of Miskolc (Figure 1). We would like to explain the knowledge development and talent support in our article. These two fields are highly important in the effectiveness of education and priority fields of an EU project. By their presentation we show the elements of the modules and the related methodology as well. A part of them is already in operation others are developed or introduced in the present moment. The knowledge development and talent supporting activities have basically common attributes. Because of this we make methodological trainings for the participating teachers to create synergetic effects. During the knowledge development teachers elaborate course-specialized workbooks on a common methodological basis. By the talent support they find those activities, which enhance the development and utilization of the skills and abilities of the students in the best way. As the result of the institutional measurement the knowledge development of the freshman became inevitable. Supervising of numerous areas is needed to create an appropriate knowledge development strategy. By the grounds of that we can have a clear view of the high school curriculum which must be repeated to be able to learn the professional subjects. The knowledge developing courses can be created by various methods. Because of the nationally centralized application in many cases we can't see knowledge-level of the students. The middle-level graduation was not designed for matriculation, only for closing up the high school. So it is not surprising that in some universities, mostly in the courses of engineering, freshman must write exams. With these the universities want to examine the basic knowledge that is needed for tertiary education. For those who do not pass that exam, a knowledge development course is recommended, where the basic high school curriculum is taught again. These exams are usually written on the registration week (before the first week) or on the first week. It depends on the fact, that a knowledge development course is compulsory or recommended for the subject. The institutional module measures the knowledge of a foreign language as well. According to this a student will write two tests. The measurement and the knowledge development of the acquaintance of a foreign language are needed because the general experience is that the graduates do not have the necessary knowledge in this field. The knowledge development for the untrained (not well trained) students becomes complex, because they learn professional subjects and foreign language as well. The teachers need methodological preparation for the knowledge development of the students who have gaps in high school knowledge. To support the students for all the courses special helping workbooks and materials are designed. Special study books for languages are also created to intensify the foreign language knowledge and to help the students at the graduation. The sense of complexity, the activities to improve effectiveness and efficiency aid the students fill their gaps, to continue their studies and finish it in their chosen course. There are measurements to identify the effects of the work at the end of the knowledge developing and language courses. The appliance of the e-learning framework is an important opportunity. With the help of these frameworks standard curriculum could be ensured for the students. With the utilization of these they can refresh their knowledge or they can prepare for the difficult subjects. The students can help themselves throughout these portals. At the master courses knowledge developing subjects are used in the practice, because the law enacts to create knowledge developing subjects for the different bachelor students to homogenize their knowledge. Knowledge developing courses will empower the talent support too. By many universities it is available for those who think that normal subjects are not satisfactory for them, to learn in a higher grade, to create extra achievement and to intense their knowledge in the scientific field with special talent supporting subjects. The essential part of the method designed in our institute is to create Talent Supporting Workshops in every faculty, where students can get into by an application. All the students in the Workshops are supported by a professor of his/her field of activity.

This support is tailor-made, the professor helps not just the scientific advancement of the student, but helps also to empower the student on other fields as well. Foreign language

knowledge improvement is essential part of the talent support, so we give the opportunity to students to learn languages accordingly their level of knowledge and interest. The success of the Workshop work can be measured throughout the study advancement, in scientific achievement, publications and language exams. The tutor motivates the students to participate in Erasmus programs, to improve their professional and language knowledge in one of our partner University. The activities of the Talent Support Workshops (tutor-program, foreign language courses, scientific consultation, and so on) are able to heighten the outcomes, and to help the students advancement and development. The introduction of the knowledge developing and talent supporting modular system is great leap forward by the improvement of the student services. It gives also the opportunity to fill in the knowledge gaps of the freshmen, and to support the talented students.

References:

- * Illésné Kovács M. – Horváth Z.: Hallgatói tanulás-módszertani és felzárkóztató szolgáltatások fejlesztése. Szakértői anyag. TÁMOP-4.1.1/A-10/1/KONV 2010. augusztus
- * Veresné Somosi M. – Hógya O.: Hallgatói tanulás-módszertani és felzárkóztató szolgáltatások fejlesztése a Gazdaságtudományi Karon. Szakértői anyag. TÁMOP-4.1.1/A-10/1/KONV 2010. augusztus
- * Szárny és Teher – Ajánlás a nevelés-oktatás rendszerének újjáépítésére és a korrupció megfékezésére. Bölcsék Tanácsa Alapítvány 2009.
- * Hogyan lehetne újjáépíteni a magyar oktatás egész rendszerét?
<http://csermelyblog.tehetsegpont.hu/node/27>