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CIRCUMSTANCES CONSTRICTING THE DIDACTIC COOPERATION OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN THEIR ASSESSMENT

The research results presented in the paper constitute only an excerpt of a broader study concerning, among others, the conditions of didactic cooperation of teachers and students and the quality of education. The subject of the analyzes in the present study are the circumstances hindering the didactic cooperation of teachers and students in their assessment. The aim of the research is to present the conditions that constrict the didactic cooperation in the subsequent stages of the educational process and their justifications expressed by both students and teachers in their open statements, as well as to formulate conclusions.

THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES – AN OUTLINE

Conducting research in the field of didactic cooperation of teachers and students in the educational process requires referring to social interdependence theory, praxeological concepts of action and cooperation, constructivist theories of education

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focused on the student, and others. The aforementioned theories have already been the subject of detailed analyzes (Krajewska, 2018, 2016), hence a summary of their characteristics will be presented below.

According to the social interdependence theory, it is assumed that the state of social interdependence is determined by mutual interactions of individuals, which results in specific outcomes (Johnson, Jonson, 2005). Positive interdependence (cooperation) contributes to the facilitation of interactions and occurs when individuals encourage and facilitate each other's efforts to achieve common objectives, and negative interdependence (competition) usually results in mutual opposition and their actions inhibit undertaking efforts and achieving goals by each of them. The theory emphasizes the significance of individuals' group and personal responsibility, as well as their activities in positive interdependence situations, in cooperation.

As far as the praxeological conceptions are concerned, it is assumed that cooperation is a positive interaction, a multi-entity action aimed at achieving common or compatible goals (Kotarbiński, 1975; Pszczołowski, 1978; Zieleniewski, 1978). The cooperation of many entities due to their specific activities and goals occurs when each of these entities helps another or is supported by another, however, if a subgroup is distinguished in a particular group, then one of its members always helps someone from outside or is supported by them. One entity helps another one if they try to enable or at least facilitate achieving their goal, and the activities of cooperating with people are interdependent. At the same time, it is assumed that practical and mixed assessments of the interactions evaluate its features determining the manner and outcome of cooperation, as well as the people involved (Kotarbiński, 1975).

According to the concept of learner-centered education, what changes is the role of the teacher in the educational process, their activities are aimed at facilitating student learning, advising, providing help and multilateral support through subjective treatment of students. The role of students is changed, too, as they become responsible for the educational process on a par with teachers. Students become responsible to themselves and the teachers for the outcomes of their work, the actions taken or discarded. They are expected to be active, independent and involved in joint activities taken together with teachers (e.g. McCabe, Una O'Connor, 2014; Blackie et al., 2010).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGICAL BASIS – AN OUTLINE

The research methodology has already been presented in detail (Krajewska, 2018, 2016), therefore an outline is presented below. It has been assumed that didactic cooperation is a system of complex multi-entity activities in the learning process, consisting of conscious actions of academic teachers and students oriented towards common or consistent objectives – prompting the learners' personality changes according to the established values and objectives, in which they help one another through their activities, enable or facilitate the course of interdependent stages of prepara-

tion, implementation, control and evaluation. At the same time, each of the stages of the didactic cooperation system contains interrelated and mutually conditioned elements – goals, subjects, subject, content, methods, means, organizational forms, conditions (internal and external) and outcomes. Therefore, the didactic cooperation of teachers and students constitutes mutual support, enabling or facilitating conscious actions taken in its interdependent stages and their interrelated elements.

The subject of the research in the present study are the circumstances constricting the didactic cooperation of teachers and students in their assessment, and the aim is to present the conditions hindering the didactic cooperation in the subsequent stages of the educational process and their justifications expressed by both students and teachers in open statements.

In order to collect the empirical material, an approach combining quantitative and qualitative research has been applied (Palka, 2018), including the method of scaling, a questionnaire and an interview (Palka, 2006). The use of the scaling method enabled the development of three subscales of estimates used for examining the state of didactic interaction and the quality of effects in the subsequent stages of the educational process and their elements. The research tool – a questionnaire (the same for teachers and students) included, among others, open questions concerning the circumstances conducive to didactic cooperation in the subsequent stages of the educational process, as well as those hindering it. The use of open questions made it possible to become familiar with a wider social context of the didactic cooperation process, it constituted an opportunity to get to know the individual experiences and preferences of respondents. 1166 students of pedagogy and 55 teachers from the University of Szczecin (US) and the University of Białystok (UB) participated in the main research, conducted in the academic year 2010-2011.

RESEARCH RESULTS ANALYSIS

The respondents' open statements regarding the circumstances hindering didactic cooperation in the respective stages of the educational process have been grouped into the following categories: internal (subjective) circumstances: dependent on teachers, dependent on students, dependent on both teachers and students, and external (objective) circumstances: related to the educational process and the organizational ones. In order for the analysis to be transparent, the results of the research are presented in separate sections devoted to the subsequent stages of the educational process.

EDUCATIONAL PROCESS PREPARATION STAGE

The results of the analysis of the teachers' and students' statements indicate that among circumstances constricting the didactic cooperation at the preparation stage

of the educational process, the respondents mainly pointed to **the external (objective) circumstances**, which, however, has been indicated more often by the teachers (87.4% of indications) than by the students (55.9%). According to the detailed statements, the organizational inconveniences proved to be emphasized the most – 68.7% of the teachers' indications and much less of the students' – 38%, in particular: numerous lecture groups – 64.5% of the teachers and 28.5% of the students, but also too small classrooms – 4.2% and 9.5%, respectively. Some of the respondents' statements in this regard are presented below:

- “too large lecture groups do not give any chance to cooperate with students in any area” (a teacher, dr hab., seniority over 20 years, UB);
- “a large number of people in the group makes it difficult to present one's needs and abilities” (a pedagogy student, first degree part-time studies, average level of achievement, UB);
- “too many people hinder communication, the lack of classroom adaptation” (a pedagogy student, second grade full-time studies, high level of achievement, US).

At the same time, the respondents indicate with similar frequency the significance of the circumstances constricting didactic cooperation related to the process of planning – 18.7% of the teachers' indications and 17.9% of the students', and what was mainly emphasized was the lack of time for teachers to talk to students about the syllabus – 8.3% of the teachers' and 6.9% of the students' indications, which was expressed, among others, by the following statements:

- “the lack of time limits or prevents cooperation with students in terms of planning” (a teacher, PhD, seniority 11-15 years, UB);
- “there is no time to talk” (a teacher, dr hab., seniority over 20 years, UB);
- “no time for discussions about the curriculum” (a pedagogy student, first degree full-time studies, high level of achievement, US);
- “no time and separate classes devoted to it” (a pedagogy student, first grade part-time studies, high level of achievement, UB).

Moreover, the respondents emphasized the significance of the conditions hindering didactic cooperation at the preparatory stage of the educational process related to **the internal (subjective) circumstances**, dependent on its participants, however, it was indicated more frequently by the students – 44.1% than the teachers – 12.2%. It was the students in particular who drew attention to the importance of difficulties related to teachers – 23.8% of total indications, but only 6.3% of the teachers', and these were mainly teachers creating a bad atmosphere, setting requirements and conditions only, as well as nervousness and haste, which is particularly highlighted by some of the following statements:

- “teachers imposing requirements only, building tension – this is crucial, that is necessary, and a lot of literature to be read” (a pedagogy student, first grade full-time studies, average level of achievement, UB);

- “rush, pace, just an outline of the curriculum and it has to be implemented quickly, time is short” (a teacher, PhD, seniority over 20 years, UB).

Table 1. The circumstances constricting didactic cooperation during the educational process as assessed by the students (S) and the teachers (N)*

Circumstances constricting didactic cooperation			Stage of educational process						
			preparation		implementation		control and evaluation		
			S	N	S	N	S	N	
Internal (subjective)	Dependent on teachers	L	178	3	87	1	119	10	
		%	23.8	6.3	12.1	1.6	25.9	22.2	
	Dependent on students	L	22	1	15	–	30	3	
		%	2.9	2.1	2.1	–	6.5	6.7	
	Dependent on both teachers and students	L	130	2	50	–	58	–	
		%	17.4	4.2	7.0	–	12.7	–	
External (objective)	Related to the educational process	L	134	9	264	22	120	4	
		%	17.9	18.7	36.8	34.9	26.1	8.9	
	Organizational	L	284	33	302	40	132	28	
		%	38.0	68.7	42.0	63.5	28.8	62.2	
	Total		L	748	48	718	63	459	45
			%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of persons who provided answers		L	499	32	501	41	375	33	
% of all respondents		%	42.8	58.2	43.0	74.5	32.2	60.0	

* The number of indications is not equal to the number of respondents, not all respondents provided answers; some of the statements were complex

Source: own study.

The significance of the circumstances hindering didactic cooperation in preparing the educational process dependent on both teachers and students was indicated mainly by the students – 17.4% of total indications, they emphasized in particular: teachers’ and students’ unwillingness to cooperate, both parties’ lack of interest, maintaining the scheme – teacher-sender, student-recipient. The following constitute chosen statements in this regard:

- “treating each other as two opposite poles” (a pedagogy student, first grade full-time studies, average level of achievement, UB);
- “teachers’ and students’ attachment to the dominant role of the teacher” (a pedagogy student, first grade full-time studies, high level of achievement, US).

The analysis of the empirical data concerning the circumstances constricting didactic cooperation at the preparatory stage allows to state that both the teachers and

the students most frequently pointed to the external circumstances related to the educational process and to the organizational ones, and they attributed less importance to the internal obstacles dependent on the participants of the educational process.

EDUCATIONAL PROCESS IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

What results from the analysis of the respondents' statements is that both the teachers and the students emphasized the importance of difficulties resulting from the **external (objective) circumstances** as for the implementation of the educational process, although it was more often the teachers' indications – 98.4% than the students' – 78.8%. The results of the respondents' statements analysis showed that they emphasized most frequently the importance of organizational difficulties, which was indicated by 63.5% of the teachers and 42% of the students, and these were, above all: a large number of students in classes/lectures, which prevents rational realization of classes – 50.8 % and 24.5%, respectively; poor timetable, the occurrence of the so-called slots in the timetable – 7.9% and 13.3%, respectively, as evidenced in the following example statements:

- “a large number of students in a group, short time devoted to one issue, it is difficult for everyone to understand” (a pedagogy student, second grade full-time studies, high level of achievement, US);
- “too many people in a group, they have no opportunity to speak out and score points for activity, there is a rat race, who will manage to raise a point; it does not matter if it makes sense, but it increases the chances of scoring a point” (a pedagogy student, second grade full-time studies, high level of achievement, UB);
- “«slots» in the timetable in between classes, we start in the morning and finish late” (a pedagogy student, second grade full-time studies, average level of achievement, US);
- “a lot of classes during the day, from the morning till the evening” (a pedagogy student, third grade part-time studies, low level of achievement, US).

What turns out to be a problem in other countries, too, is the number of students in lecture groups: “In France, the Netherlands, Italy, the USA, at the turn of the century, it was possible to find groups of students ranging from 300 to 1000 [...]. However, in such countries as the UK, the size of groups has been smaller until recently. [...] in many countries, large lecture groups of over 500 students are not unusual at universities” (Mulryan-Kyne, 2010, pp. 175-176). The size of a group has influence on teachers' didactic work, which is confirmed by a research carried out in New Zealand: “Sometimes we only have to enter a crowded classroom and «throw» the content to students, hoping that they will understand” (Hockingset al., 2009, p. 489).

However, the respondents emphasized the importance of the circumstances constricting didactic cooperation related directly to the implementation of the educational process with a similar frequency – 36.8% of the students' indications and 34.9% of the teachers', referring in particular to: not enough didactic units reserved for subjects of difficult and comprehensive content – 16% of the students' indications and 17.4% of the teachers'; difficulties with the access to modern teaching aids – 14.6% and 14.3%, respectively, which is confirmed by the following statements:

- “no time for full realization of the tasks” (a WUT student, second grade part-time studies, average level of achievement, UB);
- “too much content during one class” (a pedagogy student, second grade full-time studies, average level of achievement, US);
- “often too small number of didactic hours devoted to a subject in relation to the scope of the curriculum” (a teacher, PhD, seniority 11-15 years, UB);
- “poor audiovisual equipment (a teacher, PhD, seniority 11-15 years, US).

Students attributed much less importance to the **internal (subjective) circumstances** hindering didactic cooperation at the stage of implementation of the educational process that are dependent on its participants – 21.2% is the total number of indications, whereas the teachers' were scarce. The students highlighted the significance of the circumstances dependent on teachers – 12.1% of responses, and, above all, the lack of teacher's care for a good atmosphere, their poor time management skills, which is contained in some of the students' statements:

- “the atmosphere of a «rat race,» pursuit of points to be scored during classes, and the teacher does not react” (a pedagogy student, first grade part-time studies, average level of achievement, UB);
- “constant rushing and sometimes wasting the time” (a pedagogy student, second grade full-time studies, average level of achievement, UB);
- “nervous atmosphere full of tensions and misunderstandings” (a pedagogy student, third grade full-time studies, high level of achievement, US).

Moreover, the students also pointed to the circumstances hindering didactic cooperation in implementating the educational process dependent on both teachers and students, and these were mainly: teachers' and students' lack of mutual understanding, unwillingness to cooperate, mutual ignorance – 7% of indications, which occurs in some of the statements:

- “lack of mutual cooperation and understanding” (a pedagogy student, second grade part-time studies, average level of achievement, UB);
- “there are situations when teachers and students «snub» each other” (a pedagogy student, second grade part-time studies, average level of achievement, UB).

Similar findings constitute the result of a research carried out among students and teachers of Australian universities (Richardson, Radloff, 2014, p. 603): “Little

attention is paid to the significance of teacher-student interaction [...], and students and teachers should perceive each other as allies, which both parties benefit from.”

The analysis of the statements provides the basis for assuming that the respondents' views are similar, and that, concerning the implementation stage of the learning process, they assigned more importance to the external factors (related to the educational process and the organizational ones) than the internal ones depending on the participants of the educational process, although there were differences in some respects.

CONTROL AND EVALUATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS STAGE

The analysis of the respondents' statements proved that both groups indicated difficulties at the stage of control and evaluation resulting from the **external (objective) circumstances**, it was the teachers, however, that pointed out this type of conditions more often – 71.7% than the students – 54.9%. The teachers particularly emphasized the importance of organizational difficulties – 62.2%, which were indicated by only 28.8% of the students, and they were: big lecture groups – 60% of the teachers' indications and 20.9% of the students'; late hours of tests, exams, long waiting times – 7.9% of the students. Some of the respondents' statements evoke reflection:

- “too many students in groups restrict the chance for correct, reliable control and evaluation, only to get things done faster [...]” (a teacher, PhD, seniority 11-15 years, US);
- “the number of students compels us to accept «mediocrity,» superficial assessment (a teacher, PhD, seniority over 20 years, UB);
- “late exams increase tension and limit results” (a pedagogy student, second grade full-time studies, low achievement level, US).

On the other hand, it was the students who indicated the significance of circumstances hindering cooperation related directly to the control and assessment process much more frequently – 26.1% of the students' indications and 8.9% of the teachers', and they were, above all: too short duration of control, the lack of adjustment of time to the level of difficulty of questions/tasks – 17.6% of the students' indications and 6.7% of the teachers'; the accumulation of exams and tests in a short time period – 8.5% of the students' responses. Here are selected statements in this regard:

- “too little time, inadequate to the level of difficulty, and then a low grade” (a pedagogy student, second grade part-time studies, average level of achievement, US);
- “concentration of exams and final tests in a short time” (a pedagogy student, first grade part-time studies, average level of achievement, UB);

- “usually, according to students, one set is easier or more difficult” (a teacher, PhD, seniority over 20 years, UB).

At the same time, the respondents emphasized the importance of the conditions constricting didactic cooperation at this stage related to the **internal (subjective) circumstances**, dependent on its participants, although they were indicated more often by the students than the teachers – 45.1% and 28.9% of indications, respectively. The respondents related to the significance of difficulties dependent on teachers – 25.9% of students and 22.2% of teachers, mainly: an unpleasant, nervous atmosphere connected to evaluation; long time of waiting for results, imposing grades, lack of justification of the assessment, which is confirmed, among others, by the following statements:

- “unpleasant atmosphere, the teacher’s nervousness (a lot of assignments, a lot of checking)” (a pedagogy student, first grade part-time studies, low level of achievement, UB);
- “long waiting for the results increases student’s stress level” (a pedagogy student, second grade full-time studies, high level of achievement, UB);
- “tense atmosphere, students being suspected of dishonesty” (a teacher, PhD, seniority 6-10 years, UB).

At the same time, it was only the students who indicated the circumstances that complicate cooperation at this stage dependent on both teachers and students: negative attitude towards each other, mutual suspicion of bad intentions, arguments concerning the course of control – 7% of total indications, which is reflected in the following statements:

- “unpleasant attitude towards each other, suspicion of bad intentions” (a pedagogy student, second grade full-time studies, high level of achievements, UB);
- “there is a general tendency for teachers and students not to cooperate during monitoring and evaluation, they seem to be enemies” (a pedagogy student, first grade full-time studies, low level of achievement, UB);
- “the lack of trust, mutual suspicion of dishonesty – too difficult questions or cheating” (a teacher, PhD, seniority 11-15 years, US).

Thus, as it was the case in terms of the previous stages elaborated on, both the teachers and the students pointed primarily to the difficulties in cooperation regarding the external circumstances (related to the educational process, as well as the organizational ones), although they emphasized the importance of the internal conditions concerning the participants of the educational process more frequently than before, and there occurred differences among the respondents, too.

The analysis of research results concerning the three stages of the educational process allows to formulate the following conclusions:

- according to the teachers and the students, it is the external circumstances (related to the educational process and the organizational ones) that impede

didactic cooperation the most at all stages of the educational process, and they were mainly: too many students in classes and lecture groups, which hinders rational implementation of classes, causes haste, limits the talking time; too few didactic units devoted to the subjects of difficult and comprehensive content; too short duration of control, lack of adjustment of time to the level of difficulty of questions; late hours of test and exams, accumulation of numerous final tests/exams in a short time;

- the difficulties in didactic cooperation related to the internal circumstances, depending on the participants of the didactic process, were attributed less significance by the respondents: teachers emphasizing only requirements and setting conditions, teachers creating an unpleasant atmosphere, nervousness and haste; bad time management; lack of mutual understanding between teachers and students, maintaining the scheme – teacher-sender, student-recipient; unpleasant, nervous atmosphere of assessment; long waiting time for exam results, no justification for evaluation.

It is evident from the analyzes carried out that the increase in the didactic cooperation of teachers and students in the educational process and, at the same time, the quality of education, requires efforts taken by the university authorities to limit the circumstances that hinder these interpersonal relations. It is necessary to consider introducing or reactivating a pedagogical training center for academic teachers (already functioning at some universities), which would enable improving and updating pedagogical qualifications. Becoming acquainted with modern trends in university didactics will be conducive to reflection, as well as their application in academic practice. It is also necessary to consider the possibility of reducing the size of student groups in classes and lectures, especially that in recent years the number of students has been decreasing, which would improve the organizational conditions of the educational process, reduce the sense of anonymity among students and, at the same time, improve the quality of relations between teachers and students. Due to the progressing changes and the significance of the quality of education for university authorities, alumni and the society, further research is needful concerning its subjective, objective and organizational conditions, both dependent on and independent of the participants of the educational process.

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CIRCUMSTANCES CONSTRICTING THE DIDACTIC COOPERATION OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN THEIR ASSESSMENT

Keywords: circumstances, hinder, didactic cooperation of teachers and students, the process of teaching

Abstract: The presented research results are a selected, small fragment of the more extensive ones. The subject of the research is the circumstances hindering the didactic cooperation of

teachers and students in their assessment. The aim of the research is to present circumstances hindering didactic cooperation in the subsequent stages of the educational process and their justifications expressed by students and teachers in open statements. Teachers and students mainly pointed to difficulties in cooperation regarding external circumstances (related to the educational process and organizational), and less frequently emphasized the importance of internal circumstances regarding the participants of the educational process.

OKOLICZNOŚCI UTRUDNIAJĄCE WSPÓLDZIAŁANIE DYDAKTYCZNE NAUCZYCIELI I STUDENTÓW W ICH OCENIE

Słowa kluczowe: okoliczności, utrudnienia, współdziałanie dydaktyczne nauczycieli i studentów, proces kształcenia

Streszczenie: Prezentowane wyniki badań są wybranym niewielkim fragmentem obszerniejszych. Przedmiotem badań są tu okoliczności utrudniające współdziałanie dydaktyczne nauczycieli i studentów w ich ocenie. Celem badań jest przedstawienie okoliczności utrudniających współdziałanie dydaktyczne w kolejnych fazach procesu kształcenia i ich uzasadnień wyrażonych przez studentów i nauczycieli w otwartych wypowiedziach. Nauczyciele i studenci głównie wskazywali na utrudnienia we współdziałaniu dotyczące okoliczności zewnętrznych (związanych z procesem kształcenia i organizacyjnych), rzadziej podkreślali znaczenie okoliczności wewnętrznych dotyczących uczestników procesu kształcenia.