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## Hermeneutic and moral versus technical and analytical functions of skill and tools of pedagogy students' work and learning

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## HERMENEUTIC AND MORAL VERSUS TECHNICAL AND ANALYTICAL FUNCTIONS OF SKILLS AND TOOLS OF PEDAGOGY STUDENTS' WORK AND LEARNING

### INTRODUCTION

A constant need and emphasizing opinions on the skills and tools of pedagogy students' work and learning are determined by both practical and theoretical aspects. The skills and tools are a subject of purposeful methodological efforts, mainly of academic teachers rather than contemporary students, however, the description of such experiences and related problems rarely occurs in the literature of the subject, they are rather passed on via university tradition, directly, orally or even mechanically, e.g. by a supervisor, the department or unit head, usually to the academic staff with few years of professional experience, only achieving their scientific output. They also often remain hidden for a long time in the teacher (master)–student relations, and they are only revealed particularly while writing promotion papers – BA, MA, and even doctoral theses.

Taking theoretical aspects into consideration, it turns out that the issue of skills and tools of pedagogy students' work and learning is included in the didactics of institutions of higher education, and, to be more precise, in its methodology. However, although there are solid textbooks on the didactics of teaching in institutions of higher education, they treat this problem marginally, what is more, there are no methodological works grasping it comprehensively. Thus, the notion of the skills and tools of pedagogy students' work and learning could be even regarded new, or at least requiring a thorough elaboration. However, it should be added that it takes on special meaning in the context of the transformations of the image of a contemporary student and parallel transformations in the functioning of institutions of higher education.

The mentioned reasons, it seems, obviously determine a new, comprehensive view of skills and tools of pedagogy students' work and learning, including their specific functions because the ordinary, technical and analytical ones, especially today should harmonize vertically and horizontally with hermeneutic and moral functions.

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## A FEW REFLECTIONS ON THE HYBRID MODEL OF CONTEMPORARY UNIVERSITY

The base for understanding the essence and sense of skills and tools of pedagogy students' work and learning, followed by working out the theoretical grasp of its hermeneutic and moral, as well as technical and analytical functions is definitely the issue of current transformation in higher education. The changes can be easily seen but it is much more difficult to remedy them because the present time is the period of universities and educating above school-leaving exams, the time of multilevel studies, the period of educational pluralism in institutions of higher education, it is the period of changes in numerous basic issues related to the processes of studying. In the whole higher education there are ongoing talks and discussions, polemics and dialogues concerning many fundamental issues connected with the processes of studying, thus, they concern goals and contents, principles and forms, methods and means, ways and organization of studying and the missions carried by universities (Niemic, 2006). However, as a result of sociopolitical and economic changes, as well as rapid development of new technologies, the discussions lead to unprecedented tensions between university and the world of business and its economic rationality. Universities, honored by centuries-old tradition, are becoming an unfriendly environment, full of suspicion and sometimes even hostility, they seem to be the place of clash between the academic tradition and modernity in the form of the market ideology with adequate social theories.

Thus, contemporary university has copped it with a new nickname, it has obtained the adjective "hybrid," which means that what occurs in it is the co-existence of contrasting, bipolar forces, reasons and discourses, yet imbalanced, and irreconcilable to each other, unexplainable and not achieving unity (Sajdak, 2013). This university is on the turn, it functions in the chaos of the environment, its didactic and educational, scientific and social role is evolving. However, it should be by all means emphasized that deep transformations must reconcile many centuries-old tradition of established academic values which include the love for, the search for and professing and defending the truth (Denek, 2014) with the challenges of knowledge-based society and the expectations of neoliberal economy and volatile labor market. Traditional university was open to various ideas and hypotheses, yet the truth was always the criterion for their assessment, now it often happens that it is challenged involuntarily, and political correctness sneaks in its place (Denek, 2013).

Present-day university resembles more a hypermarket in which education is an open-access commodity, and educational offers wait on the shelves, they are easy to take, whereas a student who has already chosen his major becomes an object of... intellectual processing, and upon graduation he should enter the labor market as a highly processed product (Sajdak, 2013), paying tribute to the ideol-

ogy of a mask instead of the face (Komar, 1997). It is also figuratively perceived as an agrotourism court in which everybody can stay for a while and additionally will be served brilliantly, and because it turns out to be quite a nice way for a few years of a stable life, there is no wonder that in addition to those old and so respectable houses, also new ones spring up like mushrooms, but built sloppily and from poor materials (Nalaskowski, 2008). And it is not known which is better, the first one which, as the fairy-tale tells, was erected only from straw, or the second one - assembled from planks, or perhaps the third one, made of brick? In each of the houses there is a crowded corridor along which crowds of students move, students who cannot find a place to stop for a moment, to think, or to meet and talk to a professor, a teacher-master (Śliwerski, 2008).

The signaled problems of contemporary university perforce also outline a new, dual view of students' skills and tools, oscillating between its tradition and modernity. And it becomes owned by a new student (Klasińska, 2014) who hardly ever reads textbooks, rarely makes traditional notes, and more often photocopies selected fragments from literature, willingly uses "new new media" with their benefaction – a virtual library (?) in the form of the omniscient internet, however, more often strays among information from many incompetent sources (websites like "ściaga.pl") than reads and comments what is valuable, and writing papers by him too often takes the forms of "copy-paste" (Morbitzer, 2014). This is a student who is constantly accompanied by "St. Mathew's effect," more often, however, in the sense of wasting chances given to him. Therefore, in this context, it seems that these are the aims of education in institutions of higher education which are the base for the operationalization of still not clearly defined functions of skills and tools of students' work and learning.

## **AROUND THE AIMS OF EDUCATION IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

As it is known, the process of academic education should each time start from careful substantial and methodological consideration of its aims, because if they are omitted or not defined properly discussions concerning the pedagogical progress and its efficiency, effectiveness, modernization and improvement become difficult, become embedded in the vacuum, simply become futile (Denek, 2014). This also happens in the case of skills and tools of pedagogy students' work and learning, the more so that their aims (functions, actions, tasks) are grasped very succinctly, or "walked around" and additionally just taken from other scientific disciplines, e.g. from praxeology, very useful to it, since one of the criteria of fulfilling those aims are efficiency (technical) recommendations referring exactly to good work. It is about reliability, perfection, accuracy, exactness, faultlessness, skillfulness, exemplariness, simplicity, dependability, efficiency, productivity of work and its products. More-

over, we should add perseverance, obstinacy, patience, diligence, agility, creativity, or objective boldness (Denek, 2014).

However, a question arises – how many present pedagogy students actually have such skills or want to develop them with full and deep conviction and commitment? (Karpińska, 2011). The new pedagogy student is a mass student (Neckar-Ilnicka, 2009). Today, everybody who has passed school-leaving exams can study, yet, as a result, studies have lost their prestige, have become an every-day thing. The thresholds of recruitment have exceeded the limits of absurd, and the mass character of studies results in a systematic drop of their level. In the university education more and more often such characteristics of the contemporary world as swiftness, changeability, superficiality and temporariness are constituted. We are departing from a strive for perfection for the benefit of the acceptance for mediocrity. A bad advisor – hastiness has sneaked into the studying process, and with it also superficiality, carelessness, easiness, ease, incognitancy, ineptitude in formulating and expressing thoughts, simplification, stress-free and laid back attitude. On the other hand, qualities such as curiosity, independence, industriousness, accountability, punctuality, creativity, accuracy, diligence, solidarity, perseverance, strong motivation and consistency of actions (and even modesty in appearance) are becoming attic treasures (Denek, 2014). It can be observed that in traditionally grasped skills and tools, such qualities were and should still remain indispensable, yet, they are also compromised in the skirmish with modernity in which almost everybody lives in a rush, with gas pedal pressed permanently, dashes through the wind with legs up, and head down, as one of the song by Video group, entitled *Alay*, ascertains aptly but unfortunately not educatively because it promotes such a lifestyle.

In the deliberations on the functions of students' skills and tools, in addition to referring to the aims of education in institutions of higher education it is also necessary to look closely at competences achieved in the course of studying because aims mean not only the beginning but also the end of actions, namely the effects of teaching and learning (Duraj-Nowakowa, 1996), and the essence of competence is exactly the final effect.

Among key competences of students in the first place are precisely those which concern the possession of proper skills and tools, both in the material, organizational and personal, self-educational sense, because special pressure is put on the capability of learning, independence, accountability, as well as the development of thinking, *strictly* it is about the ability to solve cognitive and implementation problems, organization of the process of learning and studying, accepting the responsibility for one's own education, using experiences and combining various elements of knowledge. It is also about noticing relations between the past and the present, and the latter with the future, coping with uncertainty and complexity of phenomena, and their extraordinary because systematic perception. Further competence which is extremely important is the search, persistent achieving, complex ordering and extracting information from numerous sources, including deepened diligence and prudence in

using “new new media”. It is also improving own views and attitudes, assessing own conduct and the conduct of others in accordance with standards and the system of universal values, adequate reacting in the conditions of change, searching for new solutions, facing adversities. Moreover, effective communication, argumentation and protection of own position, readiness to listen and take into consideration the views other than one’s own. This is cooperation, and through it reaching an agreement, acquiring the ability to negotiate, taking group decisions, it is also an action – skillful organization of work, both one’s own work and the work of others, mastering the techniques and the tools of work, designing actions, and moreover, taking responsibility for their progression and results, rational organizing and spending free time, so that it could serve harmonious development of one’s personality (Denek, 2011).

*Nota bene*, the model of competences shaped in the course of studies and defined like this includes both hermeneutic and moral, as well as technical and analytical competences, by which it contributes to the solution of the problem of this paper as presented in the title. Therefore, what is the basis for not only the essence of the functions of pedagogy students’ skills and tools selected to be analyzed, but also what should their relation consist in? Now so, to answer this question it is worth using, among others, the essence of knowledge, as well as hermeneutic and moral, as well technical and analytical competences.

## **FUNCTIONS OF SKILLS AND TOOLS OF PEDAGOGY STUDENTS’ WORK AND LEARNING**

In the contemporary academic education the concept of utilitarian epistemology is trying to settle in. The concept puts an emphasis on teaching-learning which is more pragmatic than transformative, which should increase its economic potential valued on the labor market. The concept contributes to the transformation of studying into the act of purchasing an educational product (Malewski, 2014). In consequence, there is an attempt to replace knowledge and general sensitivity with an ability to write Curriculum Vitae and make a good impression by means of public relations, management and image creation techniques. Does learning and studying not serve the reflection over oneself and the world, but their practical acquisition? (Domaradzki, 2009).

Similarly, we can look dually at the issue of the place and role of skills and tools of pedagogy student’s work and learning in the academic education process, however, rather hypothetically at present because the skills and tools should perform analytical and technical, as well as hermeneutic and moral functions. Yet, should the first ones be the basis for the other ones, or vice versa, or perhaps another composition ought to be considered? Therefore, if we want to answer the question formulated in this way, it is obvious that the two functions first require to be presented (perforce in a rudimentary way here because of the size limit of the article, but it is

also determined by some gaps in the literature). The basis for their explanation is the technical and analytical and hermeneutic and moral competence model derived from the philosophy of two rationalities in pedagogy (Kwaśnica, 2007). The main foundation of the deliberations is systemology in pedagogy, from which the essence of skills and tools of pedagogy students' work and learning has been derived (Duraj-Nowakowa, 2000). Moreover, this approach will also stand behind further explorations conducted here.

In the systemic perspective, skills and tools of work are made of two components spontaneously uniting into the wholeness which is harmonious vertically and horizontally, it is about a material and organizational element of the skills and tools and their personal, self-educational component, which influence each other and are in feedback to each other, creating a dynamically changing system of primacy, subordination or equivalence. In this way, knowing specific properties of the skills and tools, we can conclude about the entirety and vice versa (Kłasińska, 2011). More broadly – skills and tools pedagogy students' work and learning are not only made up of a room, or even a set of rooms with the space and area adequate for the needs and abilities, properly equipped with didactic equipment and means, namely the workplace, both permanent and changeable and movable, that is the places of actions which serve organizing various forms of studying (thus, own room, own place to learn, or configuration like the university – the library-home). The skills and tools include skill and tool-related documentation gathered for scientific improvement, not only in the material sphere but also, equally, intellectual sphere and efficiency (Duraj-Nowakowa, 2000). The personal and self-educational components join with skills – of studying the literature of the subject, of its analysis and interpretation, making notes, practical application of various genres, including the use of correct Polish and specialist vocabulary. Moreover, the skills and tools consist of skillful work of the student during lectures and classes, as well as the ethics and etiquette of studying. Values, attitudes, aspirations and life orientation of students, their interests and psycho-physical properties of development are their background, and in a significant way precise their systematic – dynamic, open and comprehensive, as well as hierarchical composition. Without knowledge of such fractions of skills and tools it is not possible to fully understand them, neither in general, nor in detail. It is even possible to extend them with others, equally important issues, as, for example, students' free time (Kłasińska, 2011).

Moving on from this necessary explanation of the essence of skills and tools, it is also needed to direct attention to hermeneutics since the functions of skills and tools of pedagogy students' work and learning for the needs of these deliberations have been defined as hermeneutic and moral, as well as technical and analytical ones, and also boiled down to the form of both aims and final effects being the essence of competences (Kaliszewska, 2015). On the other hand, because the pedagogical literature describes practical and moral, as well as technical and analytical competences (Kwaśnica, 2004, 2007), and because at present they are a certain model of solving

the problem stated in the title, it is justified to refer to hermeneutics. The more so that its application on the basis of humanistic sciences is useful in the face of the state of permanent revolution and interpretational conflict, when simple assumptions and rigid schemes do not face up the complexity of human existence and the diversity of determinants conditioning its shape, and the traditional explanations based on them (not hermeneutic ones) are always fragmentary and serve “squeezing” the world into the previously established framework. Therefore, it seems necessary to replace (complete) this model with the procedure guided by the logics of reconstruction, thus, the material analysis of things themselves (Wysocka, 2003). Hermeneutics is an art of lecturing, explaining, it is also defined uttering, presenting, explaining making something become comprehensible, it is an art of understanding the sense of various areas of reality (Ablewicz, 2003). The subject of the research into hermeneutics is understanding, namely the intellectual apprehension of what is individual, specific.

The explanations given above prompt to make the following assumptions, namely the aim of the skills and tools of pedagogy students’ work and learning is to gain and operate with technical skills of studying (tools of cognition) in the way which will provide technical and analytical knowledge needed to future educators and will let them enter a higher level of hermeneutic and moral knowledge, and in consequence, they will also become the base for corresponding competences, in accordance with the thesis that first it is necessary to master the trade, in order to acquire the arcana of the chosen knowledge and science (Duraj-Nowakowa, 2015). In the situation of the aforementioned transformations of contemporary university, it is not an easy task, also because universities very often face the inheritance of students’ failures from previous levels of education (Karpińska, 2011). When entering university, students should be technically prepared to studying, but in fact they have problems with reading comprehension, not to mention reading on the epistemological level, they cudgel their brains over their written assignments, however, they can analyze educational problems, but not necessarily find a solution. We can say that they walk along a winding road above which a light leading to the destination flashes - these are sparkles of technical and analytical skills glimmering with a specific nucleus of hermeneutic and moral knowledge, yet both need lighting. This issue, however, deserves separate deliberations. The complementation of the deliberations conducted here will be the announced characteristics of technical and analytical, as well as hermeneutic and moral knowledge and corresponding competences. It will be an answer to the question what the student’s skills and tools should provide him with, thus, it is a question about the aim and the functions.

Mastering skills and tools, their place and organization, as well as technical skills, should result in technical and analytical knowledge, namely the one which is the object of causative actions of man, the experience showing the world of objects, the world of other people and ourselves. The intention of this knowledge is the question about the possibility to achieve aims set by man, thus, what and how can be done to transform the world in accordance with the set aims, in what way one can extend

technical reign over it, how to submit it to more and more control to dispose it better and so that is served man's goals (Kwaśnica, 2004). Technical and analytical knowledge corresponds with postulative, methodological and implementation competences, namely the skills which have objectively established scope of applications. Hence, postulative competences, also called normative, is an ability to advocate instrumentally understood aims and identify with them. They help to imitate the aims achieved by others or to choose aims compliant with the adopted convention, and to set own aims. Methodological competences consist in acting according to regularities and regulations indicating the optimum order of actions, and they can be a result of imitation, an effect of aware observation of learned principles of operation, as well as own original ideas. Implementation competences stand for an ability to choose means and create conditions supporting the achievement of goals (Kwaśnica, 2004).

Skills and tools of work and learning should serve not only the mastering of technical skills but also understanding hermeneutic and moral knowledge. This type of knowledge is a specific human experience because it is achieved in the communication practice, in broadly understood dialogue and discussion (Okraj, 2012). It provides a comprehensive vision of the world, man understands himself and the world as an ordered wholeness having sense, he can differentiate between what has the binding force for him and what is deprived of sense according to him. Knowledge of this type gives a possibility to define the rules of determining the sense and provides moral principles establishing the attitude to himself and to other people, and normalizes his conduct. It enables dialogue-based communication with others, owing to which it is constantly subject to revision and critique and owing to which it is a lively knowledge being in constant motion (Kwaśnica, 2004).

Hermeneutic and moral knowledge corresponds with interpretational, moral and communication competences. The essence of interpretational competences is an ability to treat the world with understanding, owing to which man perceives the world as a reality which requires constant interpretation, continuous revelation of its sense. On the other hand, moral competences are an ability to have a moral reflection, they encourage consideration over the legitimacy of own behavior. They are important also because they support the questions about what man should be like and how he should act to be true towards himself and not yield to enslavement and moreover, not to limit others in their rights to internal freedom and subjectivity with his behavior. Communication competences are understood as an ability to dialogue-based manner in the dialogue with oneself and with others. In this way, a dialogue becomes an overt discourse being an attempt to understand oneself and what encompasses us. The discourse reconciles an inability to answer the questions which are ultimate but very important because they constantly search for the answers about the sense of human existence and the sense of the world, it is an exchange of what is most personal, individual and unique. Competences of this type express in an ability to feel empathy and unconditional acceptance for another person, an ability to critique understood as a search for hidden premises of own and other people's views, beliefs

and behaviors, as well as the non-directive attitude which consists in presenting own point of view as a suggestion, and not an order (Kwaśnica, 2004; Kaliszewska, 2015).

## CONCLUSION

In the contemporary science various and numerous relations are taking place in the form of transition, e.g. from the static to dynamic approach to science and knowledge, from constant to historically changeable model of rationality and scientific knowledge. However, it is worth

considering whether this is only about ambivalence, namely duality, divalency or polarity–bipolarity, namely the duality of approaches. Since the wholeness does not only consist of two opposite or separate parts but is varied, plural, pluralistic, if we think about its components, aspects or, even more, factors, conditionings. The truth about the wholeness lies somewhere between the two polarities and it is not only multi-sided in reality but versatile. The problem is how to spot this versatility, how to recognize it, how to approach the truth about it (Duraj-Nowakowa, 2005, p. 240).

Thus, a very probable assumption is that it is not only about equilibrium duality in perceiving and fulfilling the functions of skills and tools of work and learning by pedagogy students because the ordinary, traditional functions – technical and analytical ones, and those being the requirement of contemporary times, that is hermeneutic and moral ones, are equally important, to the extent that they should harmonize vertically and horizontally. It is a tempting proposal for further, in-depth studies and research.

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## HERMENEUTIC AND MORAL VERSUS TECHNICAL AND ANALYTICAL FUNCTIONS OF SKILLS AND TOOLS OF PEDAGOGY STUDENTS' WORK AND LEARNING

**Keywords:** pedagogy students, skills and tools, university, education functions

**Abstract:** In the literature of the subject, statements on the functions of skills and tools in pedagogy students' work and learning are at the moment still general, incomplete, and inadequate in relation to current possibilities and needs, as well as the properties of students' developmental age, the requirements of academic teachers and the university education process. Thus, with regard to the requirements of the contemporary times it is necessary to emphasize that it is not only about the specificity and equilibrium duality in perceiving and fulfilling those functions because both those ordinary, technical and analytical functions and hermeneutic and moral ones are equally important to such an extent that they should unite and harmonize vertically and horizontally.

## HERMENEUTYCZNO-MORALNE A TECHNICZNO- -ANALITYCZNE FUNKCJE WARSZTATU PRACY I NAUKI STUDENTÓW PEDAGOGIKI

**Słowa kluczowe:** studenci pedagogiki, warsztat pracy, uniwersytet, funkcje kształcenia

**Streszczenie:** W literaturze przedmiotu twierdzenia na temat funkcji warsztatu pracy i nauki studentów pedagogiki w chwili obecnej są jeszcze ogólnikowe i niepełne oraz nieadekwatne w stosunku do aktualnych możliwości i potrzeb oraz właściwości wieku rozwojowego studentów, wymagań nauczycieli akademickich oraz procesu kształcenia uniwersyteckiego. W odniesieniu do wymagań współczesności konieczne staje się więc podkreślenie, że nie chodzi tylko o specyfikę i dwojakość równoważną w spostrzeganiu i wypełnianiu tych funkcji, bowiem równie istotne są zarówno te zwyczajne funkcje, techniczno-analityczne, jak i hermeneutyczno-moralne, a zatem aż tak, że winny one ze sobą współgrać wertykalnie i horyzontalnie.