

## TEACHERS' TRAINING COURSES AT MENDEL UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY IN BRNO

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### Abstract

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Our contribution deals with the problems of teachers' training courses at the Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry in Brno. It is divided into three basic areas. At the beginning it contains legislative framework of teachers' training in the Czech Republic which is followed by description of the teachers' training courses at the Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry in Brno as well as its further development.

university, teachers' training courses, career education, specialized training teachers, university teachers

The Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry in Brno is the oldest agricultural and forestry university in the Czech Republic. The former University of Agriculture in Brno had been established in 1919 and existed up to 1944. During that time it underwent a lot of organizational and methodological changes and schooled almost 20 000 agricultural engineers, more than 6500 forestry engineers and almost 5500 economic engineers for the work in different industries.

Nowadays, the Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry in Brno consists of four faculties: the Faculty of Agronomy, the Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology, the Faculty of Business and Economics and the Faculty of Horticulture. Almost 8000 students study at the University in this school year. The University has accreditation for 25 bachelor study programmes, 12 master study programmes containing 17 study branches and 19 PhD. study programmes containing 29 study branches. Within the study programmes the students can attend the whole range of specialized subjects whose curricula have been tailored to the needs related to the Czech Republic's membership in EU.

Based upon the decision of the Rector, the Institute of Lifelong Learning (ILL) has been founded at

the University as one of the University workplaces. At the beginning the Institute included 3 main areas of activities: career education (Courses: Professional Schooling of Forest Owners, Additional Pedagogical Course for Teachers of Specialized Subjects), specialized education (Courses: Growing Trees for Energetic Utilization and Energetic Utilization of Wood) and senior citizens education (University of Third Age).

Nowadays the Institute of Lifelong Learning carries out lifelong learning in three areas: career education, specialized education and senior education.

Within the **career education** the educational programmes (courses) are offered to the applicants. These are relatively independent units, tasks and assessments of achievements, whose objective is fulfillment of the aims of courses. These courses are completed by obtaining a certificate of course participation or passing final exam or obtaining a certificate of professional competence. These courses are divided into particular modules. Career education usually contains minimum one-semester courses, which were known as post-graduate courses. Its typical representative is Additional Pedagogical Courses for Specialised Subjects Teachers and Instructors of Specialised Training.

**Specialized education** is made up of a set of mostly short-term courses (apart from language courses). They are completed by obtaining a certificate of participation.

**Education of senior citizens** is provided for the Czech seniors at the University of the Third Age at the Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry in Brno (MUAF). The courses participants have a status of students though not in the sense of the Law No. 111/1998 Coll. about higher education and all following additional laws and regulations. The University of the Third Age is designed as the course of lectures and seminars offered in topical blocks. First two years of study contain topics within the key areas of all MUAF faculties while the third year of study contains topics based on students' choices.

The Institute of Lifelong Learning tries to address the following groups of possible courses' participants: business people from the area of farm production, forestry, wood technology, MUAF graduates in all phases of their professional careers, MUAF students, MUAF academic workers, secondary school graduates primarily of agricultural, forestry, wood technology and horticultural orientation as well as senior citizens at post-productive age.

Within the framework of career education the activities of the Institute of Lifelong Learning are significantly oriented at training of teachers of specialized secondary schools and universities. In this regard Brno has had a long tradition as the roots of this type of education can be found here in the 70s' of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Historical experience arms the current teachers' training courses lecturers with valuable stimuli for its transformation called for by the current conditions in the Czech secondary and higher education.

#### OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The general objective of this contribution is to show the possible ways of teachers training courses for teachers of specialized subjects at secondary schools and universities at MUAF in Brno which is based upon the analysis of legislative documents of the Czech Republic. There are three particular targets:

- Analysis of current legislature of the Czech Republic related to the area of further pedagogical education of teachers at secondary schools and universities (1<sup>st</sup> target).
- Description of current pedagogical educational activities at Institute of Lifelong Learning (ILL) at MUAF in Brno (2<sup>nd</sup> target).
- Introduction of vision of further development of pedagogical education at MUAF in Brno (3<sup>rd</sup> target).

For the introduction of this research work we

have used various research methods. Among others they were mainly the study and analysis of legislative resources of the Czech Republic in the area of pedagogical education which means that for obtaining the information we were dealing with indirect documenting methods. The methods of description of the current state of pedagogical education at MUAF in Brno and its further modeling its prospective shape have also been included.

#### ACHIEVEMENTS

1<sup>st</sup> target: Analysis of current legislature of the Czech Republic related to the area of further pedagogical education of teachers at secondary schools and universities.

With effect from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2005 the Czech legislature introduced Law No. 563/2004 about pedagogical workers and about adjustments of certain laws. This norm is related to the performance of pedagogical workers at kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools, their further training and career system.

Obtaining of professional qualification is dealt with in § 9, Par. 2 of above mentioned Law, which reads:

*Teacher of secondary school specialized subject can obtain qualification by taking accredited master study programme*

- a) in the sphere of pedagogy aimed at professional preparation of specialized subjects' secondary school teachers or*
- b) study programme related to specialized subject taught and university study obtained at accredited bachelor study programme within the sphere of pedagogy aimed at professional preparation of secondary school teachers or **education obtained in a lifelong learning study programme provided by a university and aimed at professional preparation of secondary school teachers, or pedagogical study programme according to § 22 Par. 1. (Law No. 563/2004 Coll. CR).***

It is obvious that currently this type of teachers' training at MUAF is fully provided in accordance with existing legislative norm as the lifelong learning courses provided by ILL at MUAF in Brno correspond with the Law (see Law No. 563/2004 Coll. CR, § Par. 1 Item b). **The courses are carried out within the programme Study of Pedagogical Sciences – Teaching Specialized Subject accredited at MUAF in Brno under no. 29 385/2005-25-334 the Ministry of Education, Youth and Physical Training of the Czech Republic (MEYPT CR).**

Qualification of the Czech **specialized training teachers** is in the above-mentioned Law dealt with in § 9, Par. 3, where is also specified that the part of qualification of such a teacher is parametres of peda-

gical character, formulated in the same way as with the specialized subjects' teachers. It means that such a teacher can obtain their pedagogical competence by graduating from properly aimed lifelong learning study programme. This opportunity is fully provided at ILL MUAF in Brno.

There is no other detail description of contents of the lifelong courses on pedagogy for specialized subjects' teachers and teachers of specialized training given by any Czech legislative norm. Only in the case of accreditation application at the MEYPT CR the applicants are limited by the minimum sum of 250 teaching hours.

Currently, professional pedagogical competence of **university teachers** is not, in contrast with secondary school teachers, legislatively treated. Legislative framework for pedagogical performance of university teacher can be found in Law 111/1998 Coll. form April 22 1998 about universities and alterations and amendments of further laws which reads in § 70, Par. (1) and (2):

- (1) *Academic workers are the university employees who carry out pedagogical, research, scientific, developing, art or other creative activities. They are obliged to support good reputation of the university.*
- (2) *Academic workers are professors, senior lecturers, lecturers, assistants, lectors and research and scientific workers who participate in the pedagogical activities.*

The Law about higher education does not use the expression **university teacher** but new, broader expression **academic worker**. The Law definitely states that the priority of academic worker is their pedagogical activities, which tops the list of activities.

Even though, currently, they do not have to be properly prepared as this is not treated by any Czech law.

It is obvious that the sphere of pedagogical preparedness of the academic workers in the Czech Republic lacks legislative norms, which means that it is fully in the competence of the management of particular Czech state-owned and private universities whether they will or will not require pedagogical education.

In 2005 the authors of this contribution tried to solve the problem of pedagogical preparedness of university teachers from theoretical point of view and within the programme of development of MEYPT CR "*Enhancement of pedagogical competence of fresh academic workers*" also from practical point of view. This was solved under the auspices of the project of the Fund of Development of Universities of the Czech Republic. Based upon the analysis of educational activities of the Czech universities as well as several other EU members, the educational programme *Development of pedagogical competence of fresh academic workers at MUAF in Brno* has been designed. Its pilot run was carried out at MUAF in Brno in winter term 2005/06.

2<sup>nd</sup> target: Description of current pedagogical educational activities at Institute of Lifelong Learning (ILL) at MUAF in Brno.

The university graduates in agriculture, food technology, ecology, mechanics, economics, forestry, wood technology, horticulture and veterinary branches can take **Course on pedagogy – specialized subjects' teaching**, which enables them to obtain pedagogical competence in teaching corresponding specialized secondary school subjects following their professional specialization.

They are paid, 4-term, combined courses containing 350 teaching hours in total. It is divided into four topical parts (Pedagogy, Psychology, Didactics and Training) which contain 19 particular subjects.

#### I: Course on pedagogy – specialized subjects' teaching curriculum

Topical part: <b>PEDAGOGY</b>	Extent/ Completion	Topical part: <b>PSYCHOLOGY</b>	Extent/ Completion
Study subjects		Study subjects	
Essentials of Pedagogy	13/exam	General Psychology	15/exam
Social Pedagogy	12/exam	Evolutionary Psychology	5/class ticket
Specialized Pedagogy	10/exam	Pedagogical Psychology	15/exam
Pedagogical Diagnostics	10/exam	Social Psychology	10/exam
Alternative Pedagogy	5/class ticket	School Hygiene and Prevention	5/class ticket
Pedagogical Consultancy	5/class ticket	Pedagogical Communication	5/class ticket
School Management	5/class ticket	Teaching Culture	5/class ticket
Totally	60	Totally	60

<b>Topical part: DIDACTICS</b>	<b>Extent/ Completion</b>	<b>Topical part: TRAINING</b>	<b>Extent/ Completion</b>
Study subjects		Study subjects	
Field Didactics	20/exam	Development of Psychodidactic Competence	15/class ticket
Presenting in the Class	15/exam	Development of Psychosocial Competence	15/class ticket, exam
Didactics of Practical Teaching	10/exam	Individual Pedagogical Controlled Practice	50/class ticket, exam
IT	10/class ticket	Final Written Paper	90/class ticket
Modern Didactic Technology	5/class ticket	Final Exam	exam
Totally	60	Totally	170

The final exam is taken in front of board of examiners and contains practical part (assessed performance within the subject Individual Controlled Pedagogical Training), public presentation of final written paper of about 30 pages and complex oral exam on three topical units (Pedagogy, Psychology and Didactics). After passing the final exam, each candidate obtains Certificate of passing through lifelong learning course – Course on Pedagogy – Specialized Subjects' Teaching.

Full-time students of all MUAF study programmes have the possibility to take a course within the above-mentioned lifelong learning course. It enables them to take three optional one-term courses Pedagogy, Psychology and Didactics during their master study. These courses are provided by the Faculty of Business

and Economics at MUAF in Brno. After graduation from them, students can apply for so-called Completion Course at ILL MUAF in Brno. That is a paid course, where the students can take topical unit Practical Part within Course on Pedagogy – Specialized Subjects' Teaching. They obtain the Certificate.

ILL MUAF in Brno provides lifelong learning course **Completion Course on Specialized Training Teaching** suitable mainly for secondary school graduates from agriculture, food technology, mechanics, economics, forestry, wood technology, horticulture and veterinary branches.

The paid 3-term distance course contains 210 teaching lessons, consultations, exercises and controlled self-study. It contains 11 subjects as shown in Table II.

## II: Completion Course on Specialized Training Teaching Curriculum

<b>Study Subject</b>	<b>Lessons</b>	<b>Consultations</b>	<b>Exercises</b>	<b>Self-study</b>	<b>Completed by</b>
Pedagogy	40	10	10	20	exam
Psychology	40	10	10	20	exam
Biology of Youth And School Medical System	10	2	3	5	class ticket
Branch Didactics	20	5	5	10	exam
Specialized Training Didactics	45	15	20	10	exam
Pedagogical Communication	10	-	5	5	class ticket
School Management	10	5	-	5	class ticket
Hygiene and Safety	10	2	3	5	class ticket
Seminar on Final Written Paper	5	-	5	-	class ticket
Individual Controlled Pedagogical Training	20	-	20	-	class ticket, exam
Final Exam					exam
Totally	210				

The final exam is taken in front of board of examiners and divided into three parts, practical part (assessed performance within the subject Individual Controlled Pedagogical Training), public presentation of final written paper of about 20 pages and complex oral exam on three topical units (Pedagogy, Psychology and Didactics). After passing the final exam, each candidate obtains Certificate of passing through lifelong learning course - Completion Course on Specialized Training Teaching.

Among the ILL MUAF educational activities, which are aimed at teachers' training, preparation of university teachers is not omitted. **The Course on**

**Development of Pedagogical Competence of Fresh Academic Workers at MUAF in Brno** is designed for them.

This course contains 48 teaching hours including two main 24-lesson topical units: *pedagogical-didactical* and *psychosocial units*, which are divided into 12 parts (see Table III). Thus, the balance in development of pedagogical-didactical and psychosocial competences, which are inevitable part of general *pedagogical competence* of fresh academic workers, is guaranteed. This approach supports and fulfills *the role of university teacher*.

### III: Course on Development of Pedagogical Competence of Fresh Academic Workers Curriculum

Pedagogical-didactical Unit	Psychosocial Unit
Current Problems of University Education	Academic Profession
Teaching at University, its Strategy and Determinants	Personality of University Teacher
Organizational Forms of University Teaching	Psycho Hygiene of University Teaching
Problems of Conventional Forms of University Teaching	Psychical Specifics of University Students
Individual University Education and Teaching	Understanding University Students
Projecting of University Teaching	Motivation of University Students
University Students – Teachers Roles Changing	Studying at University – Students' Point of View
University Teaching Organisation	Learning and Its Barriers
New Approaches to Assessment	Cognitive Styles and Approaches of University Students to Learning
Testing Tools	Social Interaction in University Teaching
Students Assessment of Teaching	Listening and Empathy to University Students
Effective University	Creation and Forming Psychosocial Atmosphere and Climate at Study Group

3<sup>rd</sup> target: Introduction of vision of further development of pedagogical education at MUAF in Brno

The main task in the sphere of teachers' training is achievement, in accordance with the Law No. 563/2004 Coll. about teachers, of **the MEYPT CR accreditation of the lifelong learning educational programme aimed at further education of teachers Course on pedagogy – specialized subjects' teaching**. Thus we can achieve complex accreditation of educational programmes following so far carried out lifelong learning courses – Completion Course on Pedagogy – Specialized Subjects' Teaching and Completion Course on Specialized Training Teaching.

Another task is to obtain the MEYPT CR accreditation of both full-time and combined **bachelor study programme Specialized subjects' Teaching**, which might significantly broaden the MUAF study programmes offer and provides the students with better possibilities at the labour market. Its establishment is given by the current Law No. 563/2004 Coll. about pedagogical workers.

In accordance with the MUAF long-time tradition to offer the specialized subjects' teachers pedagogical qualification, it would also be appreciated to obtain the MEYPT CR accreditation of both full-time and combined **bachelor study programme Specialized Training Teaching**. It will be a university study programme offer for university graduates who will prepare, in accordance with the Law No. 563/2004 Coll. about pedagogical workers, for profession of teacher of specialized training or practical secondary school teaching.

The inseparable part of teachers training is also repeated courses on development of pedagogical competences of fresh academic workers at MUAF in Brno. The pilot run of this programme has been introduced at MUAF in Brno within the successfully presented development project FDU CR 1869/2005 and development programme MEYPT CR 2005 about enhancement of qualification of academic workers at MUAF in Brno.



## DISCUSSION

The development of the secondary school teachers' professional competences expects intensive utilization of **experience and training relating methods of teaching**. Its inevitable part is also **discussion**, which enables sharing personal methodology, experience and perceptions as well as the ability to perceive and respect those of the others. Therefore all types of teachers' training prefer direct contact between learners and teachers. In this respect the personality and profession enhancement are achieved, which creates prospect for interiorisation of suitable teachers' behaviour.

Professional achievements, which are perceived as a significant prospect for creation of performance potential of teachers, are provided by means of **specialized teaching texts**, which are created with regard of primary principles of distance learning. The study literature contains important theoretical knowledge derived from study programmes so that the learners can obtain fundamental theoretical knowledge about teaching by means of self-study. Thus the space for

direct contact of teachers and learners in the teaching – learning process is created to stress the above-mentioned **activating teaching methods**.

## CONCLUSION

Teachers' training at the Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry in Brno provided by the Section of Career Education at the Institute of Lifelong Learning and supervised and carried out by the academic workers of the Department of Pedagogy of the Institute of Arts Subjects at the Faculty of Business and Economics at MUAF in Brno.

This contribution describes both the legislative methods of teachers' training in the Czech Republic and its current state at MUAF in Brno. It shows its content and methodological pros and cons. It also deals with possible prospects of development of teachers' training and its supposed qualitative enhancement that will provide MUAF in Brno significant ways for improvement of its compatibility among other Czech universities.

## SOUHRN

Učitelské vzdělávání v podmínkách Mendelovy zemědělské a lesnické univerzity v Brně  
Příspěvek se zabývá problematikou učitelského vzdělávání na Mendelově zemědělské a lesnické univerzitě v Brně. Jeho obsah je směřován do tří stěžejních oblastí. Zpočátku je nastíněn legislativní rámec učitelského vzdělávání v podmínkách České republiky a následně je věnována pozornost realizaci učitelského vzdělávání na Mendelově zemědělské a lesnické univerzitě v Brně i jeho dalším perspektivám.

univerzita, učitelské vzdělávání, kariérní vzdělávání, učitelé odborných předmětů, učitelé odborného výcviku, vysokoškolští učitelé

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