

Possibilities for Student Organizational Learning in University's Curriculum

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Abstract. The current paper is aimed at investigating the possibilities of the university curriculum for student organizational learning. The authors have analysed scholarly literature for the purpose of investigating the concepts of the formal and hidden curriculum. The paper also contains deep insights into learning objectives and outcomes as well as the study process and study model for developing organizational learning skills. With reference to the formal and hidden curriculum analysis method, the article discusses Top 10 Bachelor's degree Business and Management programmes (QS World University Rankings) offered at universities in Europe. According to the specified parameters, the possibilities of developing organizational learning skills are explored. The carried out analysis and the interpretation of the obtained data reveal that the formal curricula designed by universities still pay insufficient attention to the development of organizational learning skills that should be treated as horizontal skills required for work at contemporary organizations. The paper also notes that all examined universities have fairly good opportunities to implement the hidden curriculum of organizational learning. The opportunities should increase if the formal and hidden curriculum emphasizing the development of organizational learning should be integrated.

Keywords: University curriculum, formal curriculum, hidden curriculum, organizational learning.

JEL Classification: I20, I23.

Conference topic: Contemporary Issues of Economics and Management Studies: Problems and Perspectives.

Introduction

The recent transition from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred educational paradigm has been the major point of attention among education professionals and researchers for some time now. The assumption that people learn from their birth until death and the learning process is not necessarily related to teaching lies in the centre of this shift (Merriks 2001; Jucevičienė 2007: 107). At the same time, the current transition from traditional models of economy to knowledge-based economy dictated by the shift in the global social-economic context has been brought by the technological and scientific progress over the last several decades and has presented a number of challenges to researchers and experts in different research areas. As a result of such shifts, knowledge has become the most valuable resource for organizations expecting to maintain a competitive edge over their business rivals. The transition to the knowledge-based economy has stimulated an increased interest in knowledge management problems among researchers, which has resulted in significant contributions to the areas of knowledge creation, acquisition, distribution, etc. (Nonaka, Takeuchi 1995; Vera, Crossan 2003; Jucevičienė 2007; Jucevičienė, Mozoriūnienė 2009). Since education is the area that depends significantly on social, cultural and economic contexts, the shift to the knowledge-based economy has presented new challenges to educational systems. Knowledge-based organizations rely on their ability to process and, more importantly, create knowledge (Nonaka 1994). Therefore, they demand employees capable of being engaged in *organizational learning (OL)*, which is one of the central features of knowledge-based organizations (Nonaka 1994). Organizational learning is that of employees (usually – learning by doing) when they seek organizational goals and knowledge necessary for implementing such goals (Nonaka 1994). Organizational learning occurs in organizations when a person identifies himself/herself as a member of the organization and acknowledges, comprehends and pursues organizational goals. For this purpose, the members of organizations have to gain new knowledge, which is usually constructed through performing organizational tasks and is instantly employed. Therefore, it is not easy to enable students to develop at least the basics of this skill at universities, as in this case, they perceive themselves as students rather than employees. Therefore, even the tasks that students carry out in groups are, at best, only a premise to develop collaborative skills rather than a possibility for organizational learning (Viz-

girdaitė 2013). Empowering student organizational learning remains a complex issue tackled only by several researchers (Oh, van der Hoek 2001; Bensimon 2005; Veisi 2010; Jucevičienė, Valinevičienė 2015). Unfortunately, there is lack of the systematic approach to all possibilities for student organizational learning, which is the *research problem* investigated in this paper.

In order to provide a systematic overview of the possibilities the university students have in terms of organizational learning, the problem will be approached from the point of view of the *university curriculum*, i.e. the possibilities the students have in the educational process, or even in a broader sense, the aggregate of the experiences students acquire at the educational institution will be stressed (Kelly 2009).

Hence, *the paper is aimed at investigating* possibilities for student organizational learning considering the university curriculum.

Conceptual framework and methodology

A structural approach to the curriculum will be adopted to reveal possibilities for organizational learning. Researchers usually distinguish between two types of the curriculum: formal (at university, it is manifested by the curriculum of the study programme chosen by the student) and hidden that refers to the emerged/created possibilities for students to acquire all other experiences beyond the boundaries of the formal curriculum. The systematic approach to determining possibilities for organizational learning dictates the need to seek interaction between the formal and hidden curriculum.

The current paper mostly focuses on theoretical insights into the problem with the emphasis on the *analysis of scholarly literature*. However, while discussing the possible manner of interaction between the formal and hidden curricula, some practically existing possibilities for developing organizational learning at particular universities are analysed. For this purpose, empiric research that allows carrying out *document analysis* is employed. Particularly, study programmes presented on the websites of the selected universities are examined (see the following chapters for further details on research methodology).

The paper consists of *the* introduction (chapter one), four body chapters and conclusions. The second chapter is dedicated to discussing the nature of the curriculum. Research methodology is presented in the third chapter. The possibilities of the formal and hidden curriculum for student organizational learning are considered in the fourth chapter.

Theoretical background: nature of curriculum

There are a number of definitions for the term *curriculum*, and, depending on the authors' approach to education, or to be more precise, to learning, all definitions fall into two groups, i.e. whether it is recognised that people learn only when being taught or whether we learn 'everywhere and always' and not only when being taught but also in different situations arising in one's life. Kalantzis and Cope (2012) define the curriculum in a very narrow manner stating that it is the design of the programmes and courses of study (Kalantzis, Cope, 2012). Such definition, despite being very clear, may seem too narrow for the discussion proposed in this paper. A much wider definition of the curriculum is suggested by Niculescu (2009) who defines it as '*the totality of learning situations connected to the subsequent learning experiences that occur during a human being's life*' (Niculescu 2009). The author explains that learning situations may occur in three different settings: a) *formal* – specifically designed and implemented within formal situations; b) *non-formal* – specifically designed in non-formal situations; c) *informal* – learning situations occurring in life with no pre-planning involved but with definite educational outcomes.

Niculescu (2010) argued that the curriculum could also be discussed looking at how real it was. Therefore, the author distinguished between the *ideal curriculum* and the *real curriculum*. Niculescu (2010) sees the ideal curriculum as a pre-planned entity that includes both the formal and non-formal curriculum. The real curriculum is defined as the sum of experiences acquired by the learner (Niculescu 2010).

Darling-Hammond and Bransford *et al.* (2005) presented typology where the curriculum was seen by the authors from several different perspectives. The authors distinguish between I) *formal curriculum* where topics and concepts are taught; II) *enacted curriculum* that actually occurs in the materials, activities and assignments selected by teachers and within interaction between teachers and students; III) *hidden curriculum* that tacitly implements the goals and perceptions that schools and teachers hold for students individually and as a group (Darling-Hammond, Bransford *et al.* 2005).

Pollard (2011) points to four types of the curriculum: a) *official curriculum* is defined as a planned education programme; b) *hidden curriculum* consists of everything that is not included into the official curriculum but is taught at education institutions through interaction with teachers and peers (attitudes, beliefs, etc.); c) *observed curriculum* is actually implemented in the classroom and can both resemble and be different from the official curriculum; d) *experienced curriculum* includes the learner's actual experience and covers both the official and hidden curriculum. This curriculum displays the results of an educational impact on the learner (Pollard 2011).

In an attempt to define the curriculum, Kelly (2009) marked its multifaceted nature and identified several types of the curriculum: 1) *educational curriculum* that reflects the values of democratic society and excludes the values opposite to the latter; furthermore, the author (ibid) noticed that the educational curriculum was difficult to harmonize with vocational elements often included into it by different educational institutions, as those tended to diminish the educational component; 2) *total curriculum* that stresses the holistic approach to education; 3) *hidden curriculum* that refers to what students learn at educational institutions not because it has been officially planned but due to the way following which the work of the school is organized. Learning can also occur through resources (provided by the educator), using them in the ways not planned or consciously designed by those involved in curriculum design or planning; 4) *planned curriculum and received curriculum* that, similarly to Pollard's (2011) notion of the official and observed curriculum, dichotomises the officially planned curriculum and student experience that can differ from person to person; 5) *formal and informal curriculum* where the formal curriculum is described as formally planned activities having a particular slot in the timetable. The informal curriculum is defined by the author (ibid) as the one occurring on voluntary basis, at lunch-time, after school hours, at weekends or during holidays and is often referred to as extracurricular activities.

Monkevičienė, Žemguliėnė and Stankevičienė (2013) maintained that Lithuanian researchers and education professionals used the terms *intended curriculum* and *attained curriculum*. In this case, the *intended curriculum* is seen as an equivalent to the notions of Pollard's (2011) official curriculum, Kelly's (2009) planned curriculum and Darling-Hammond and Bransford's *et al.* (2005) formal curriculum, whereas the attained curriculum is considered to be similar to the notions of Pollard's experienced curriculum, Kelly's received curriculum and Niculescu's real curriculum (Monkevičienė, Žemguliėnė, Stankevičienė 2013). The authors have also distinguished between the notion of *the implemented curriculum* that consisted of the observed curriculum examined by Pollard (2011) and the hidden curriculum discussed by most of the abovementioned authors.

The scope of this paper will be limited to investigating the impact of university's formal (intended, planned, official) and hidden curriculum on student OL. We will proceed from Pollard's (2011) assumption that if official and hidden curricula meet the learner's needs, his/her experienced curriculum will be the widest and will match the planned curriculum the most. The experienced curriculum is the real result of educational activities (Pollard 2011). Thus, we will consider Niculescu's informal curriculum as a part of the hidden curriculum notion due to the fact that is not pre-planned.

The multifaceted nature of the hidden curriculum was stressed by Macleod (2014). The author claimed that it was difficult to discuss a single, ubiquitous, hidden rather than a multiple hidden curricula. Macleod came to a conclusion that the curriculum, including formal, informal, and even (especially) hidden, was fluid and contextual (Macleod 2014). By the broadest approach, one may consider the notion of the hidden curriculum to consist of a) the curriculum that tacitly implements the goals and perceptions that schools and teachers hold for students individually and as a group (Darling-Hammond 2005), b) all that is not included into the official curriculum but is taught at education institutions through interaction with teachers and peers (attitudes, beliefs, etc.) (Pollard 2011), c) what students learn at educational institutions not because it has been officially planned but due to the way following which the work of the school is organized (Kelly 2009) and d) learning situations occurring in life with no pre-planning involved but with definite educational outcomes (Niculescu 2009).

Therefore, the formal university curriculum can be defined as a study programme. The staff responsible for implementing a particular study programme at the university has to ensure proper conditions for organizational learning to take place if the development of the organizational learning skill is included into at least one of the following documents regulating the study programme:

- a) as an objective or learning outcome on the official list of learning outcomes;
- b) as one of the topics/themes on the general list of the curriculum topics.

The hidden curriculum at the university refers to everything that students learn not because it was planned in the formal curriculum but because they were at the institution communicating with different people and involved in different activities. This approach is mostly similar to the ideas of Kelly (2009).

Research methodology

Possibilities for student organizational learning in the university curriculum are determined with the emphasis on: *Formal curriculum*, i.e. what is reflected in the objectives, curriculum (themes) and forms of studies, methods, other day-to-day activities taking place at the university. In this case, two research methods are applied:

- a) to identify possibilities for organizational learning arising from university activities, document analysis is applied. The analysed documents include study programmes presented on the websites of the selected universities. To make this research feasible (there are thousands of universities offering a number of study programmes), a highly selective approach to sampling had to be adopted. Therefore, the authors decided to limit research to:

- the analysis of business and management programmes thus looking at how these had the highest probability of fostering efforts to develop organizational learning skills, as students were trained for managerial positions following these programmes;
- the analysis of undergraduate (Bachelor's degree) study programmes as these are usually selected by the majority of high school leavers who surely lack organizational learning skills. Whereas the students who prefer Master's degree study programmes usually have some work experience, this means that organizational learning skills may not be included into these programmes as their developers believe students have acquired necessary skills at work;
- the universities offering business and management study programmes recognized by ranking bodies as the best in Europe (selected on the basis of the QS World University rankings indicating 10 best universities teaching business and management subjects); top ten European universities selected (foregoing the world's top universities) due to the fact that all European universities follow the Bologna requirements that emphasise learning outcomes. Thus, the comparability of study programmes at different universities is increased.

Data have been selected analysing study programmes on the basis of the following key elements characteristic of the curriculum:

- Are the objectives or learning outcomes that can hint at developing organizational learning knowledge/skills indicated (organizational learning skills, group learning skills, construction of collective knowledge, etc.)?
- Are the topics/courses that may include organizational learning content included (human resources, organizational behaviour, knowledge management, organizational learning, etc.)?
- Are internships included in study programmes? What information is provided? The very fact that internships are included in the study programme would allow considering particular hypothetical conditions for organizational learning.

b) The analysis of scholarly literature was applied to identify new educational models/methods validated by researchers and empirically tested by applying them in real studies as educational innovations.

Hidden curriculum was also investigated by applying the document analysis method (analysis of the same university websites and study programmes presented on these websites as in the case of the formal curriculum was conducted). The analysis was aimed at investigating the following issues:

Can students get involved in the activities of the clubs or other organizations at the university? What are the names of the clubs and organizations?

If so, do any of them clearly communicate with the possibility of developing skills of organizational learning?

Does university life offer other possibilities promoting organizational learning?

Research ethics. The authors sought to remain ethical in their approach to universities as organizations. The fact that some of higher education establishments may be sensitive to the revealed fact that attention paid to organizational learning in their curriculum is insufficient has been acknowledged. Therefore, data in Table 1 are provided only by indicating university codes. The universities are not presented in the order they appear on the ranking list.

Looking into the possibilities of student organizational learning as reflected in formal and hidden curriculum

Next, we will proceed from the statement that organizational learning takes place within organizations at the individual and collective level (Jucevičienė 2007). According to Nonaka (1994), organizational learning is related to generating organizational knowledge necessary for organizations to tackle the emerging challenges and improve their performance. Therefore, organizational learning requires the members of a particular organization to contribute to the knowledge pool of the organization thus helping it to pursue the established goals.

For university graduates starting their careers in the organizations able to contribute to the creation of organizational knowledge immediately after graduation, they would have to acquire organizational learning skills at university. Thus, the formal curriculum should include conditions that would allow students to acquire organizational learning skills which, however, are obtained pursuing organizational goals aimed at tackling real organizational problems so that to solve what new organizational knowledge has to be created. The problem, as noted by Jucevičienė and Valinevičienė (2015), lies in attempting to put students into real organizations (Jucevičienė, Valinevičienė 2015). This issue presents a great challenge to universities. The ways to overcome it have to be reflected in the university curriculum.

As mentioned above, the third chapter of the paper analyses the curriculum of the best Business and Management study programmes delivered at European universities according to the website of QS World University rankings (2016) (to such extent to which university websites provided such information; see Table 1).

Table 1. Possibilities for organizational learning reflected in 10 best Business and Management undergraduate degree study programmes delivered at European Universities (Source: QS World University Rankings 2016)

| University code (study programme) | Formal Curriculum | | | Hidden Curriculum |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| | Learning outcomes | Course units, courses, themes | Internships in the industry | Clubs, other organizations |
| U1 (Management) | Ability to manage work in multicultural teams; | Cross-cultural teams and project management | Optional | Student union, student associations, students' nations. Students' art clubs (about 25) and sports' teams. Religious societies, political societies. |
| U2 (Management) | Learn about knowledge and learning | Elective modules: Management, Organisations & Society. Integrative project | Not included in the study plan | Students' union. Different Orchestras, Several Chorus, Several Bands. More than 300 student-run societies and sports clubs. |
| U3 (Management, International business economics) | Teamwork (ability work with group dynamics) Knowledge Management; | Knowledge management; Human resources management. | Optional. Students choose either to study abroad or undergo an internship. | Students' union. More than 300 societies. |
| U4 (International Management) | | Work, organization and society; | NO | Students' union, alumni club. More than 70 sports clubs. |
| U5 (Management) | | Organizational behaviour; Consulting project in external organizations; | Yes. Consulting project in external organization | Different clubs. More than 50 sports clubs. Students' union. Alumni club. |
| U6 (Management of Business and Technology) | Competences of Teamwork and collaboration | Human resources Department collaboration (a complex project involving group work). | Yes, 4 credits – semi-annual, module description holds no hints at OL. | Radio club, photo club. |
| U7 (Business Administration) | People management skills | Elective courses: business simulations; | Optional cannot exceed 30 ECTS. No module description. | Students are provided support to start their own clubs. Numerous sports clubs. Alumni club. |
| U8 (International Economics and Management) | Abilities of Managing knowledge | Organization Theory | Not included into curriculum. | Theatre Group, Choir, dance companies; Student representation, student association |
| U9 (Management) | Ability to foster Collective learning | Work based learning. Human resources management. Management simulation. | Yes. Duration – entire year. During this placement students work on their projects within companies | Students' union, leisure club, sports clubs. |
| U10 (International Business Administration) | Understanding of individual and collective behaviour in organizations | Organizational behaviour. Human resources management. | Optional. | Sports clubs, Academic business club, trading club, etc. Student representation. Debating club, theatre company, choir, etc. Alumni club |

Possibilities of formal curriculum for students organizational learning

This chapter focuses on the possibilities of including at least the basics of organizational learning into the formal curriculum of the university.

Learning outcomes

First, it is necessary to mention that no university (either offering study programmes in management only or in both business and management) has a direct reference to organizational learning skills among the listed intended learning outcomes. However, three universities – U9, U8, U3 – have included learning outcomes that are quite similar to the investigated learning outcomes (these universities expect their students to acquire ‘collective learning’, ‘managing knowledge’ and ‘knowledge management’ abilities respectively). Other universities list learning outcomes that are usually important for organizational learning but do not ensure it entirely: U1 and U6 expect students to develop teamwork abilities, U7 – to manage people, U10 – to understand individual and collective behaviour in organizations. Meanwhile, U2 is more learning-process rather than learning outcomes oriented (learn about knowledge and learning). No learning outcomes or objectives of study programmes were found on the websites of universities U4 and U5.

Study process: courses and interships

Putting emphasis on the significance of student internships, projects and simulations is of crucial importance to creating conditions for organizational learning. At the same time, the courses that introduce students to the theoretical basics of organizational learning should not be ignored.

Student internships in organizations also play a significant role, as it is possible to immerse students into organizational activities. The role of student internships on student performance in on-campus activities and their professional activities has been studied by numerous authors. For instance, Chouinard (1993) investigated the impact the internships had on the learning outcomes of a particular study programme. Katula and Threnhauser (1999) stated that the purpose of the internship was twofold: to provide students with understanding organizational structures and protocol within a professional working environment and with an opportunity for professional development (Katula, Threnhauser 1999). Hurst and Good (2010) noticed that internships were of value to the student, employer and university (Hurst, Good 2010). Hergert (2011) maintained that internships played a critical part in allowing students to connect traditional classroom activities and the workplace. Hergert stressed the relevance of teaching instructions to maximize the effects of internships. The author found that the significance of internships could be greatly enhanced if educators provided an appropriate structure and integrated internship experience with student academic background (Hergert 2011). It should be noted that students may choose to enrol in internships that have not been included in the formal curriculum (e.g. summer placements in companies). Such instances, however, are not discussed in the current paper, as it focuses on educational conditions created within the curriculum.

Two (U3 and U9) of the abovementioned three (U9, U8, U3) universities are quite close to their intended learning outcomes to ‘*the ends*’ focused on organizational learning skills, as they actively demonstrate the creation of conditions for achieving such learning outcomes. Knowledge Management courses and internships in companies are also stressed, particularly at university U9 that has an intended internship for the entire year. These universities may be expected to have practically created certain conditions for developing organizational learning.

Curriculum U5 foresees interaction between a course and an internship. Module ‘Consulting Project in an External Organization’ has also the status of the internship. University U2 also deserves additional attention despite the fact that it does not foresee an internship, but the curriculum stresses an integrative project. Four universities (U1, U3, U6, U10) foresee optional internships, however, U6 also includes business simulation into the curriculum. Therefore, it is possible to expect that students at university U6 would have at least partially created conditions for practicing organizational learning independently of whether they choose between having an internship or not.

No internship is intended in the curriculum of universities U4 and U8, as the study programmes provided by these universities are limited to courses that are not from the Knowledge Management area. Thus, information on the curriculum provided on the websites of these universities do not convince that conditions for organizational learning will be ensured.

Thus, *only* some of undergraduate Business and Management study programmes delivered at European universities presented as top ten in QS World University rankings present convincing information regarding at least partially created conditions for developing skills of organizational learning on their websites.

Such not very optimistic statement can be partially conditioned by some research limitations: the successful application of the selected research methodology (analysis of the study programme curriculum presented on the university webpage as a document) depends on how exhaustive is information on the curriculum provided on the website. The conducted research revealed that information on the curriculum was not presented in an exhaustive manner. It is worth noticing that applicants to these programmes will also get only information provided on the websites (unless they would inquire for more information personally). Therefore, there is a high probability that students applying for positions in these study programmes will not be initially motivated to develop their organizational learning skills, or to be more precise, they will not be motivated to consider such possibility.

Student internships also pose certain doubts: does it really ensure the possibility for students to develop organizational learning skills? It is true that student internships represent the most widespread form of studies, which enables student work in real organizations. During the internship, students are given the possibility of getting involved into a certain extent of organizational activities. Thus, it is possible that the students of business and management study programmes are involved in the creation of organizational knowledge, and consequently in organizational learning, during their internships. However, can the same be expected of student internships in other study programmes (e.g. engineering, medicine, etc.)? The gained experience dictates that student internships are usually aimed at deeper insights into the application of subject-specific knowledge in work practice mastering different technologies related to it rather than going deeper into the managerial and organizational aspects of the organization.

Actually, long-term placements are more reliable (such placements are found only in one of the investigated universities – U9). The so called ‘sandwich courses’ serve a good example of long-term placements and its significance to the curriculum; such placements are successfully implemented at universities in England. The characteristic feature of such programmes was that they included a substantial work placement that often lasted as long as a year (Mason *et al.* 2003). Wilton (2012) maintained that such placements were considered to be a significant asset for the graduates entering the labour market, i.e. compared to their peers having no placements, sandwich students were advantaged in most study areas, including business, management and finance in the labour market (Wilton 2012).

Wilson (2012) also revealed the limitations of sandwich degrees were imposed by the barriers that deterred students from choosing such placements. According to the author (Wilson 2012), these barriers included: *a) time pressures of application; b) uncertainty in securing a placement; c) strong pressure of a peer group to opt out; d) difficulties in finding a placement close to the university or parents' home.* However, the author pointed out that some universities were successful at ensuring the satisfaction of the majority of students regarding their sandwich placements. The author drew a conclusion that sustaining a sandwich course structure in university degrees depended on university culture, strategy and course portfolio (Wilson 2012).

Therefore, even though long-term internships are significant, there seem to be no contributions describing how to employ them thus to develop skills of organizational learning.

Study process: teaching/learning methods and models

Teaching/learning methods cover teacher and student activities based on bilateral interaction when a teacher creates educational conditions for a student/s in order to achieve the set objectives, whereas students select learning activities suggested by the teacher and the ways of learning matching their needs. To achieve the set objectives, several interrelated teaching/learning methods are usually applied. The sequence of these methods is predetermined by the teacher or can be described in educational research literature. In such case, we can speak of a teaching/learning (educational) model. In terms of organizational learning, the teaching/learning model is emphasized, as the educational power and duration of a single moment is usually too insignificant to considerably develop organizational learning skills.

– Project – based learning as a model.

Universities devote a lot of attention to problem solving studies. Upon reviewing numerous contributions dedicated to problem-based learning at universities, Thomas (2000) highlighted the interaction of teacher-student activities as a complex system. Applying the right methods is not enough to master such activities, because a model is needed: Project-based learning (PBL) is a model that organizes learning around projects (Thomas 2000: 1).

As previously mentioned, one of the selected universities (U2) have foreseen an ‘Integrative Project’ module in its formal curriculum. Unfortunately, the formal curriculum presented on the university website does not provide further details on the module. Therefore, one can only expect that university U2 applies PBL as a model the way it is applied at Aalborg University that developed PBL. Such PBL model also provides vast possibilities for organizational learning.

Aalborg University offers students the kind of university experience where they work in closely-knit groups engaged in problem based project work. The manner of work where students perform in close collaboration to tackle real-life problems is often referred to as *participant directed learning* in the Danish tradition and is similar to what education researchers often refer to as the *social learning* theory (Kolmos *et al.* 2004). The descriptions of study programmes on the Aalborg university website revealed that students often worked in small groups that resemble organizations. According to Kolmos *et al.* (2004), the traditional learning model at Aalborg University is based on problem-based project work, in which approximately a half of student time is devoted to projects. Despite not being elaborated as an intended learning outcome, it seems natural that the environment students work in at Aalborg University and the approach to learning can promote OL. Furthermore, some study programmes at Aalborg university have a very close cooperation with the industry. For instance, the students enrolled in the *Economics and Business Administration* Bachelor's degree study programme have an integrated company project in their third year of studies. Students are tasked with identifying real-life problems the companies face in their day-to-day activities and with implementing a multidisciplinary approach to solve these problems.

Having recognized undoubtedly valuable practical implementation of and research on the PLB model at Aalborg University, it has to be admitted that no sources dedicated to PBL for learning organizational learning were discovered.

Therefore, a question about an educational model that empowers studies on *organizational learning* arises?

– EDENSOL as an organizational learning development model.

Yes, such model does exist. It was developed by one of the authors of this paper and her PhD student to simulate an organization in the study process, which was aimed at solving a real-life problem, by applying organizational learning (Jucevičienė, Valinevičienė 2015). The authors verified validity of this theoretical model in practice in the course delivered at Kaunas University of Technology.

The researchers have based the EDENSOL model on the theory of educational environments (Jucevičienė 2013) and the organizational learning SECI model, supplemented with learning environments *Ba* and knowledge assets (Nonaka *et al.* 2000). The authors have chosen the EDENSOL acronym, which became the name of the model, as the model highlights educational environments (EDucational ENvironments) that empower student organizational learning (Student Organizational Learning). Jucevičienė and Valinevičienė (2015) proceeded from the assumption of Von Krogh *et al.* (2000) that the environments assigned to the stages of creating organizational knowledge (*ba*) had to be enabled through organizational activities. The researchers noticed that the concept of *ba* had a number of similarities with that of learning and educational environments and were empowered through the same factors (Juceviciene, Valineviciene 2015).

The essence of EDENSOL:

1. A three-dimensional objective is set and presented to students along with appropriate learning outcomes:
 - a) *to acquire/develop particular subject-specific/interdisciplinary knowledge and skills.* E.g. since the EDENSOL model was implemented in master in education study programme in “Learning in Knowledge and Information Society” module, it was aimed to develop skills of the construction of educational roots in particular place. Usually, the *subject-specific/interdisciplinary* knowledge and skills objectives are presented first, since organizational learning skills are most often developed as horizontal ones;
 - b) *to acquire/develop organizational learning knowledge and skills necessary for problem solving.* While presenting this objective, it is necessary to explain that students will have to complete a task which is a real problem, and to solve it an organizations is needed. At the foundation of such organization lie creative activities, thus, organizational knowledge is constructed on a regular basis and organizational learning inevitably takes place;
 - c) *to practice and develop service learning skills,* while solving a problem relevant to the society. This aspect of social relevance and even the feeling of social responsibility is necessary to provide greater motivational force to student activities and learning. Therefore, the provided problem-solving task has to be relevant to a particular group(-s) in the society in such a way that the group (-s) would be interested in its solution. Application of the design thinking approach is desirable as it would create a fitting result for these particular group (-s) of the society.

It becomes evident that the theoretical foundation for such three-dimensional objective is the cubic curriculum (Wragg 1997).

2. Students are provided with a study task.

The study task which requires organizational learning has to not only match the requirements for a three-dimensional study task. It has to be designed in such a way which would presume steady social interaction among students, motivate them to reach the common goal and construct shared collective knowledge. Thus, the task has to be designed in such way that it could be completed only by an organization rather than an individual student or a small group of students. Since a real-life socially-relevant problem is tackled, PBL and project-based learning are required.

3. Teacher's organizational and methodical support to students.

First of all, the teacher has to justify the necessity for forming an consisting of several departments (the departments consist of students carrying out the task), as well as explain why is constant coordination between the departments necessary and why there is a need for the organization and department's leaders. Students are encouraged to model the organization that is capable of solving the presented problem themselves. The teacher or team of teachers are assigned a consulting role. The created organization follows the project management organizational structure, its culture has to be based on the collaboration principle, the empowering transformative leadership style has to prevail. The organization has to be perceived by students as a social unit, which operates to achieve the set aims, was deliberately created as the structure of activities and is related to the external environment (Kirst-Ashman, Hull 2015). Conditions for collegial organizational behaviour are created: students as acting members of organization are given the liberty of decisions and responsibility for the results. When such model of organization is designed and approved, students engage in a discussion to choose their roles.

The teacher carries out organizational and educational activities both while creating the organization and preparing it for activities. The problem-based task, PBL and principles of project-based learning as well as the problem solving context and people (representatives of the society) the students have to cooperate with to complete the assignment are presented. The teacher devotes a lot of attention to presenting organizational learning as a condition imperative for constructing organizational knowledge necessary for achieving organizational aims. The organizational learning as a spiral of knowledge creation is presented to students, as well as principles of organizational learning and the stages of socialization, externalization, combination and internalization (Nonaka 1994) and peculiarities of learners' activities to be implemented in the problem-solving process.

The teacher provides continuous support to students in terms of consultations, especially as they design the solution for the problem.

4. Learning outcomes and their assessment.

Three learning outcomes are analysed:

- a) as a result of completion of a task/project (solution of a provided problem) it is assessed by members of the society. It is imperative that the acquired socially valuable result – solved socially significant problem – is presented to the stakeholders by students as an organization. Students should be informed of such presentation upon being introduced to the task. The experiment conducted by the authors of the model revealed that such awareness serves as a major motivation factor for the organizational learning to occur;
- b) student's contribution toward achieving the organizational goal is assessed by his/her peers;
- c) organizational learning and subject-specific competencies developed by the student are assessed by the teacher, considering assessments (a) and (b).

Hence the sequence of educational environments for student empowerment for organizational learning consists of a problem-based task design and involvement of students into the solution of the task through organizational learning. Students break the problem down, foresee alternative ways of solving the problem, justify the best solution for the problem, plan their activities and resources necessary for the solution. All of these activities take place as students participate in an organization where they are divided into departments/project teams. It is also important to appoint team leaders and foresee other necessary functions and environments for knowledge sharing. Social stakeholders (i.e. external organizations) should be involved in the process to motivate students to solve the problem. A teacher or a team of teachers carry out the role of coordinators and consultants. This way student organization, which is involved in problem solving and prepares a joint project, is created as a platform for organizational learning.

Summarizing possibilities to develop student organizational learning at university provided by the formal curriculum, it is necessary to notice that special attention has to be devoted to presentation of organizational learning in terms of learning objectives and learning outcomes within the curriculum itself and by communicating it to students. Unfortunately, analysis of the top 10 European undergraduate Business and Management degree programmes presented on the university websites revealed that neither had such learning objectives and learning outcomes directly formulated. However, descriptions of the study programmes hinted at some hidden possibilities of developing organizational learning skills. However, if such possibilities are to be practically realized, educational models fostering and developing these skills have to be implemented in the formal curriculum. These models combine learning objectives and learning outcomes as well as the study process, wherein students act as an organization to solve socially significant real-life problems.

Possibilities of hidden curriculum for student organizational learning

Having discussed the possibilities to include development of at least the basic organizational learning skills into the formal curriculum at universities it is necessary to see how the hidden university curriculum can promote learning of these skills.

As Portelli (1993) stated the hidden curriculum teaches in such a way that the students are usually unaware of having been taught anything.

The current paper addresses the possibilities for student organizational learning in student organizations within the university such as student representations or art and sports clubs.

As a rule, those students who are involved in the activities of student bodies (representations/unions) can be exposed to organizational learning. This is due to the fact that members of student bodies share the same organizational goals, a mission and a vision; furthermore, student organizations, just like any other contemporary organizations, constantly face challenges, which require them to solve ill-structured problems. For this purpose new organizational knowledge is constantly needed. Therefore, organizational learning inevitably takes place in such organizations. Thus, students employed in such organizations usually develop organizational learning skills imperceptibly, by solving organization's problems along with the other members. Of course, it requires time.

Art clubs, more specifically – orchestras, choirs and drama companies - have especially significant organizational learning by experience potential. When orchestras, choirs and drama companies achieve high performance level they are able to improvise while performing a piece or a play. Researchers have revealed that interpretation of a

piece performed by an art group comes as a result of organizational learning (Kline, Saunders 1993; Ceruti 2004; Tamušauskaitė 2012). Actually, some researchers see organizational learning as knowledge sharing that takes place during regular communication. However, Ceruti (2004) claimed, that organizational learning in an art group occurs due to the latent relations between artists and the emotional environment emitted by them and the performers as well as the performance of the piece itself. Therefore, despite having no reservations that students participating in high level art groups practice organizational learning, it remains unclear whether they would retain the same level of the skill if they started working in business organizations, which are not known for their artistic performance relations. Therefore, further research into the issue is necessary.

Participation in activities of sports and business organizations may also involve students in practicing organizational learning. Unfortunately, there is no literature investigating organizational learning in sports teams. As a matter of fact, if collective solutions to improve activities are implemented on a regular basis while practicing sports, such teams would also display organizational learning. However, it is a hypothesis that requires investigation.

Analysis of data presented in Table 1 revealed that students from all 10 universities have vast possibilities to get involved in activities of student organizations art and sports clubs. This in turn means that all the universities have sufficient possibilities to implement hidden curriculum of organizational learning. However, to what extent are universities aware of such possibilities?

Portelli (1993) distinguished between two scenarios, which may involve the hidden curriculum: 1) students are aware of the hidden curriculum and the teacher is not; 2) the teacher is aware of the hidden curriculum but the students are not. There seems to be a third scenario as far as organizational learning is concerned: neither teachers, nor students are aware of the hidden curriculum. Teachers fail to see these organizational learning possibilities due to the fact that it has not been emphasised: organizational learning is not foreseen even in the formal curriculum. Not to mention that students pay no attention to what skills they acquire as they do not know even know how it is called. To them, this skill remains “tacit knowledge on the *know how*” level. According to researchers in knowledge management (Eraut, 2000), experience which remains on the tacit knowledge level is quite quickly forgotten, unless it is constantly revised.

So, what is there to be done?

It is clear that there is no room for partial solutions in this case. One such partial solution might be to introduce students to the processes involved in organizational learning and hope they would learn it during their internships in the organizations. Unfortunately, universities have to consider the fact that so far, relatively few companies have well-established knowledge management systems. Therefore, it seems unlikely that students would be involved in the organizational knowledge creation processes. Thus, one should not totally rely on the possibilities provided by internships.

First of all, as was mentioned above, universities should acknowledge organizational learning as an important ‘horizontal’ skill and include it into the formal curriculum. However, this should be done systematically – it should be included into learning objectives and learning outcomes, EDENSOL model should also be applied, (at least in the initial stage of developing organizational learning skills). Also, there is a high probability that this way students would individually seek additional ways of developing their organizational learning skills, by participating in activities of student organizations, art and sports clubs. Portelli even claims that students are capable of determining or developing a hidden curriculum of their own (Portelli 1993). It is therefore possible that students who have been instructed in the ways of organizational learning would (sub)consciously seek to exercise this skill while acting as members of various student organizations.

The calls of researchers (Hall 2009; Kommalage 2011) for merging formal curriculum and hidden curriculum, especially – non-formal and informal are becoming ever more prominent. For instance, formal curriculum might include at least a single module with a set number of credits for knowledge, skills and competences acquired beyond the confines of the formal curriculum. This is especially relevant in terms of developing organizational learning knowledge and skills.

Conclusions

Organizational learning is a skill necessary for work at contemporary organizations shifting their focus on innovations and organizational knowledge constructed within this process. To develop this, students must clearly understand the organizational goal and be involved in reaching it through organizational activities, including organizational learning defined by socialization, externalization, combination and internalization stages.

Universities face a serious challenge that lies in creating conditions in their formal and hidden curricula for students, particularly for those of Bachelor's degree studies, to practice the organization that promotes organizational learning. The formal curriculum is a study programme described by the aim and objectives of learning, the studying process, learning outcomes and their assessment. Organizational learning skill development included in the formal curriculum can be developed as the transferable ones in different courses as a side outcome, but at least one course unit has to focus on the organizational learning skill development as a main outcome. The hidden curriculum in-

cludes all other possibilities of a student, as a member of the university community, for acquiring experience in the form of knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies.

The analysis of Top 10 Bachelor's degree Business and Management study programmes (QS World University Ranking) offered on the websites of European universities has shown that none of the formal curriculum provided for the Internet users, including applicants, clearly reflects the objective of organizational learning development and learning outcomes. Nevertheless, one of the universities are aimed at 'collective learning', and two universities have formulated objectives on knowledge management in which structure organizational learning may be included. The formal curriculum of three Top 10 universities provide for student internships in external organizations; one of the universities point out a full-year internship, four universities offer students internship as an option and three universities do not plan any internship. Internship in the organization is considered to be favourable but fails to ensure a possibility of organizational learning, because only relatively few organizations have knowledge management systems installed to ensure opportunities for organizational learning in managerial terms;

students at all 10 investigated universities have the possibilities of developing organizational learning skills through the hidden curriculum and being involved in the activity of associations, clubs and sport organizations, particularly in art troupes. However, in this case, the student may not detect that he/she has the skill of organizational learning as his/her experience obtained.

In order the universities successfully trained Bachelor's degree students for organizational learning, they should specify the objective and outcome of organizational learning in the formal curriculum and provide measures for implementing this course; this must be clearly reflected in the university-provided internal and external communication, particularly on the Internet;

organize the study process within the course emphasizing organizational learning skill development by the EDENSOL model;

integrate the formal and hidden curriculum in order to enhance the development of the skill and competence of organizational learning by providing a possibility of the formal recognition of student organizational learning skill obtained in the course of non-formal or informal activities.

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