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REPORT ON WORK VISIT:

UNIVERSITY OF GREENWICH AT MEDWAY
FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE, CHATHAM

UNIVERSITY
of
GREENWICH

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As part of Tempus project, „Modernization and Harmonization of Tourism study programs in Serbia" 544543-TEMPUS-1-2013-1-RS-TEMPUS-JPCR, a study visit of representatives of higher education institutions – partners in the project) was organized to the University of Greenwich (Faculty of Engineering and Science, Chatham).

Participants of the study visit and training programs were:

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The aims of the visit and training can be classifed in the following manner:

1) Management of teaching process quality,
2) Application of modern work methodology in education;
3) Practical preparation of teaching materials;
4) The role and importance of modern technology for distance learning (Moodle);
5) Examples of good practice and experience in teaching in Great Britain.

1. PRESENTATIONS (lectures and training)

In the opening part of his lecture, prof. Milan Antonijević PhD, presented us with the history of British education, as well as with the founding and development of University of Greenwich and its headquarter located in the southeast part of London that was recently proclaimed to be the greenest University in Great Britain,.

After the introduction part, professor held a lecture on teaching methods used at the University of Greenwich at Medway, Faculty of Engineering and Science, Chatham, and he provided several examples of teaching practice. It has been pointed out that the system for quality assurance at the University implies regular and systematic tracking of realizations of the teaching process and taking measures for quality enhacement of curricula, teaching, teaching staff, grading system, text books and literature. Such procedure fulfils well-defined standards and

ensures the quality of academic study programs. Professor Antonijević presented a set of documents that portray demands, principles and practice that are applied to during the process of creation, development and implemention of study programs.

As part of a lecture on the topic of control and inner quality assuarnce, it has been pointed out that study programs composed of obligatory and elective courses have got to be recognizable in the world, and subjects' curricula has to be authorized. All programs and subjects need to be formally approved, systematically monitored and periodically revised.

At University level, Committee for teaching and quality, controls the assurance and enhancement of quality in the whole of University while Academic Committee is in charge of activities related to cooperation. Central unit for teaching and quality:

- takes on a role of a university system controler and controler of quality assurance procedures;
- has the task of developing a strategy and learning and quality policy;

- advises and supports schools in their quality assurance activities;
- controls and approves activities and cooperates with other quality assurance agencies.

Prof. Milan Antonijević, PhD, during his lecture on the external quality assurance system, called our attention to the importance of Quality Assurance Agency at national level, this Agency is being responsible for regular external control of quality assurance measures applied at all higher education institutions in Great Britain. Moreover, professor singled out the role of regular inspection of teacher education, as well as the importance of conducting periodical evaluations of research activities.

When it comes to internal evaluation of both teachers and subjects, students evaluate a subject and teachers without stating explicit names of teachers/teaching assistants. Special

attention is placed on data protection of both teachers and students. An interesting detail is that the results that student achieved at mid-term tests and exams are not available to the public.

During a lecture on Quality assurance strategies and procedures, we were informed that they are designed so that they:

- offer a student with adequate academic experience,
- ensure the quality and standards of rewarding and lecture classes
- encourage and enhance quality and stimulate the development of the curricula by demanding from its staff to, through mutual evaluation, grade each subject and program that they teach and

- fulfill conditions of external agencies in relation to standard harmonization and enhancement of learning possibilities.

Implementation of Quality Assurance Strategies and procedures takes place through authorization of new external examiners, i.e. through approval of new study programs, grading, suspension, oversight and critical review of programs. Academic infrastructure, in accordance with quality assurance strategies and procedures is:

- defined by requirements in terms of which outcomes, qualifications with a common name should have (for example graduate student or master) thus ensuring that the titles are consistently used;

- given through concise and clearly planned outcomes of programs and means with which planned outcomes will be achieved and presented;

- described with what gives the discipline its coherence and identity, and

- defines what can be expected from graduate students in terms of skills and techniques necessary for acquirement of subject understanding on different levels.

Besides the above mentioned, other elements of quality assurance strategies and procedures are: external examiners, students` feedback, i.e. student research as well as data on efficiency.
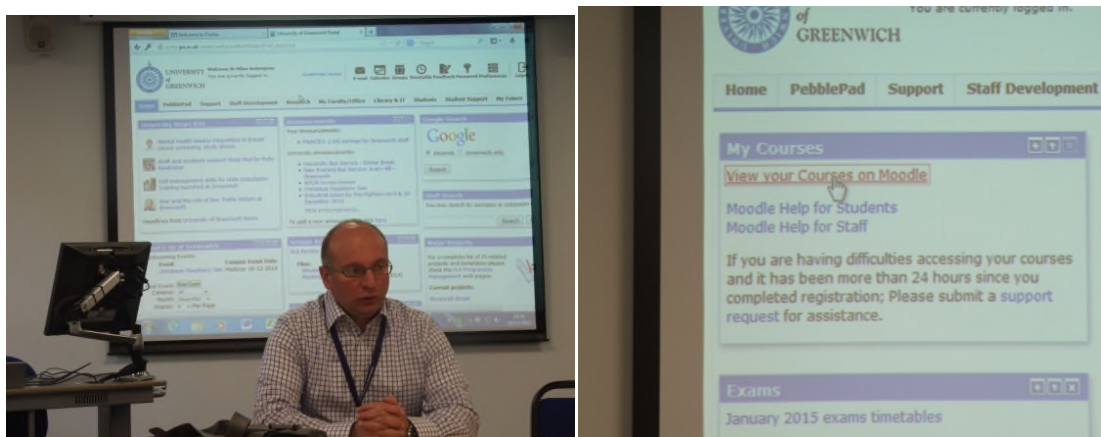
Special emphasis is placed on continuous teacher development and trainings. Stimulative measures and not punishments are used to introduce changes. University policy is that teachers work from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. i.e. overtime is not stimulated. Teaching process is realized through:

- lecture classes, practice classes, lab classes and additional classes, workshops and seminars;
- third year courses and discussion classes with teaching staff;
- fourth year courses which imply a great amount of independent learning;
- final projects on the forth year.

Teachers are obliged to, before lecture classes begin and via electronic network, distribute lectures and direct students to the textbook necessary for exam preparation. Students have at their disposal iPod devices (received with payed tuition). Creativity in development of teaching materials is of great importance as that is one of the ways to achieve student engagement. Each student has his/her own mentor who follows student's progress. Mentor – student meetings are obligatory 4 times in the winter and 3 times in the summer term.

University has, through a research, determined that the sixth week of study period is the most critical in the sense of dropouts. In accordance with the policy of further growth and development of the institution and student support, a key performance indicator has been introduced in order to keep track of student outflow. A limit of 10% of allowed dropouts has been determined. It has been determined that 1 ESPB demands approximately 10 hours of student engagement. In the UK, a student can, after each year achieve 120 ESPB (in Serbia that number is 60 ESPB).

Seventeen parameters with the help of which a student progress is monitored have been identified and defined. A recommendation is that video clips do not last longer than 5 minutes, and the ideal time is between 3 and 5 minutes. Also, out of 45 minutes that a class lasts, 50-60% of the class should be used for lectures and the rest for problem solving. Further recommendation is that each presentation contains questions, if possible at the end of a whole. Students' knowledge is graded in the following way: 40-50% of the grade – mastered material – 3. category, 50-60% - 2. category second level, 60-70% - 2. category first level and 70-100%

mastered material – 1. category (class) of students. When calculating the average grade of a student the following rule is applied: grades from the first year are not taken into account, grades from the second year participate with 25% and grades from the third year with 75% in calculating the average grade of a student.

Milan Antonijević, PhD described the phases through which courses and programs must go in order to be approved and he also pointed out the necessity of continuous monitoring of courses and programs and their periodical revision. In the conclusion professor presented the tools for unified learning – Moodle, that are used at the University of Greenwich at Medway.

Moodle is a software package for the creation of Internet-based courses and web sites. It works on every computer that supports PHP and supports many types of data base (it especially well supports MySQL). It is free as it is a software of open source code. Besides a great number of available options it offers to its users, it is easy to use, and users can easily manage various tasks. The design and development of Moodle is guided by a learning philosophy and manner of thinking that includes:

- Constructivism – this philosophy believes that humans actively construct new knowledge through interaction with the surrounding;
- Constructionism – this theory considers learning to be especially efficient when you construct something for others to experience;
- Social constructivism – this part of the philosophy expands the above mentioned ideas to the group of people who construct one for another thus creating their own, joined culture with shareable meanings;
- Connected and separate – this idea tries to explore deeper motives of an individual that participates in discussion.

Main characteristics of Moodle are:
- Moodle is active, constantly developing and being enhanced;
- Suitable for completely autonomous on-line courses or it can be an addition to face-to-face courses;

- Simple, small hadware and software demands, efficient, easy to access via search engine;

- Simple for installation on each platform that supports it;

- List of courses is available on the web site which describes all the existing courses, including rules and rights of platform access;

- Courses can be categorized and searched. One Moodle web site can support hundreds of courses;

- The emphasis is placed on high level of security – all forms are controlled, data is checked, send data is being encoded;

- Most of the texts that are uploaded on the platform can be edited with the available WYSIWYG HTML editor;

- For each task, final submission dates and maximum grades can be set;

- Students can – coordinated with the date of saving - upload their assignments on the server (in the desired format);

- Assignments can be uploaded even after the final submission date but in that case, subject lecturer is informed of delay time;

- For each individual assignment, the whole „class" can be graded (together with comments on the assignments) in a single form on one page;

- Comment of the lecturer is linked to the page on which solutions to the assignments can be found, and as such comment is send to a student via e-mail;

- Lecturer can allow for the solved assignments to be once again handed in so that they could be, after the first grading, graded once again;

- Lecturer can create quizzes with various types of questions and various answering options;

- With the use of backup function one can save complete courses, which, later on can be reconstructed on another Moodle platform.

2. VISITS

During our study visit to University of Greenwich at Medway, i.e. Faculty of Engineering and Science, Chatham, we had an opportunity to visit Greenwich, London and Canterbery and their numerous cultural-historical sights.

A) In Greenwich we made a visit to the complex and official premises of University of Greenwich (rectorate). Afterwards we had the pleasure of visiting the famous observatory with the prime meridian. We then went to Maritime museum, saw the Royal Naval College, etc. Cruising down the Thames we had an opportunity to reach the center of London – Westminster Abbey and Big Ben.

B) In London we were able to pay a visit to most important tourist attractions, and thanks to professor Antonijević, we had the pleasure of visiting Serbian City Club.

C) We also went to Canterbury – a lively small town, located on the river Stour. Walking along the city rampart dating from roman times, we explored the city center and the famous cathedral.