

Does Competence-Oriented Higher Education Lead to Students' Competitiveness?

Karine Oganisjana, Tatjana Koke

University of Latvia

Jurmalas st. 74/76, LV- 1083, Riga, Latvia

e-mail: Karine.Oganisjana@lu.lv, Tatjana.koke@lu.lv

crossref <http://dx.doi.org/10.5755/j01.ee.23.1.1228>

According to the analysis of the stage of economic development of the countries reflected in "The Global Competitiveness Report 2010-2011" and conducted within the framework of the World Economic Forum, the EU countries have either innovation-driven economies or are in the transition stage from efficiency-driven to innovation-driven economies. Focusing on the educational aspects and human capital for further economic development of EU countries, quality higher education and training, business sophistication and innovation are what should be developed. These three competitiveness aspects are not independent: they tend to reinforce each other, and a weakness in one area often has a negative impact on other areas (World Economic Forum, 2010). Moreover, all of them are tightly related to entrepreneurship and their development concerns the promotion of students' entrepreneurship in the study process at higher educational institutions. Being recognized as one of the lifelong learning key competences, in the European documents entrepreneurship is defined as a combination of entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and attitude (Commission of the European Communities, 2005). However, the PhD research "The development of students' enterprise in study process" conducted by Karine Oganisjana under the scientific supervision of Tatjana Koke in the University of Latvia (Oganisjana & Koke, 2008; Oganisjana, 2010 a,b) revealed that the concept of entrepreneurship is broader than just a mechanical combination of entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and attitude. Entrepreneurship is defined as a dynamic system of individual's causally interrelated personality traits, motivation, cognition, needs, emotions, abilities, learning, skills and behaviour, on the basis of which an individual or a group of individuals interact with the context (environment) for identifying, generating and realizing opportunities into new values (Oganisjana, 2010b). Therefore, if higher education (HE) is oriented towards the development of students' competence only, which is acknowledged as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes, the development of the other components of entrepreneurship are not taken care of and the creation of new economic values which then makes the key determinant of entrepreneurship not to be in the focus of such HE. The paper presents the main findings of the research and raises a question about the reconsideration of the capacity of competence-oriented higher education for promoting students' entrepreneurship and as a result for increasing their competitiveness.

Keywords: *competitiveness, entrepreneurship, competence-oriented higher education, holistic approach to entrepreneurship.*

Introduction

The literature analysis showed that the researches in entrepreneurship lack a common platform of comprehension on the matter of entrepreneurship and there is a great number of competing contradictory theories. The conceptual ambiguity and confusion in the comprehension of the matter of entrepreneurship is manifested in the very beginning while defining it as:

- process (Schumpeter, 1934; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Bygrave, 1993; Drucker, 1993);
- individual's different qualities, skills, abilities & traits (Korunka et al., 2003; Kearney, 1999; Brockhaus, 1982; McClelland, 1961; Hornaday & Bunker, 1970);
- behaviour (Stevenson, 2000; Gartner, 1988; Hebert & Link, 1989);
- combination of individual's behaviour and different qualities (Gibb, 2007, Hollenbeck & Whitener, 1988; Herron & Robinson, 1993).

In this research these contradictions are explained by the striving of researchers to substitute the holistic complex nature of entrepreneurship by its separate components; it is not an appropriate approach as entrepreneurship is a system and it ought to be researched holistically (Oganisjana, 2010b). It determined the further course of the research.

The aim of the paper is to explore the holistic matter of entrepreneurship and relate competence-oriented HE to it in order to analyse the potential of today's HE institutions for the development of students' entrepreneurship.

The tasks set for achieving the aim are based on the theory of holism (Smuts, 1927):

1. to determine the components of entrepreneurship;
2. to analyse the links between them;
3. to elaborate a model of entrepreneurship which will show in what way all its components function together as a whole (as a system);
4. to find an appropriate way for analysing contemporary competence-oriented HE concerning the development of students' entrepreneurship.

Research methods: 1. Qualitative content analysis of the text created of 50 interpretations of the concepts of "entrepreneurship", "enterprise" and "an entrepreneur"; the data obtained in the course of the coding were processed with AQUAD - 6.0 software (Huber & Gürtler, 2004). In this way the nine components of entrepreneurship: personality traits, abilities, skills, learning, motivation, emotions, needs, cognition and behaviour were determined.

2. Modelling – having explored the links and interactions between entrepreneurship components based on pedagogical, psychological, management and economic

theories, “The holistic structural functional model of entrepreneurship” was elaborated (see. Figure 1).

3. Projecting – in order to analyse to which extent competence oriented HE is able to promote students' entrepreneurship, the five learning gaps of students, specified by Greg Light and Roy Cox (Light & Cox, 2005) were projected on the largest learning cycle of “The holistic structural functional model of entrepreneurship” (Figure 2).

The novelty of the research – the holistic approach to the comprehension of the matter of entrepreneurship, which maximally integrates different entrepreneurship theories and reveals in what way students' entrepreneurship can be developed holistically in study process while creating new economic values.

The holistic structural functional model of entrepreneurship

The nine components of entrepreneurship are depicted within the dashed lined box (see figure 1). The functioning of the model is explained as follows. By “Learning” and practicing, “Abilities” as they arise from nature without training, turn into “Skills” (Herron & Robinson, 1993) (link1). “Personality traits” have their effects on “Behaviour” mediated by “Motivation” (transition 2 → 3) and moderated by “Skills” (Hollenbeck & Whitener, 1988; Herron & Robinson, 1993) (regulation point 3). It means that “Skills”, like an adjuster, intensify certain “Behaviour” if they are appropriate for realizing the goal set, or, on the contrary, hold back from active “Behaviour” if they are not sufficiently developed for it. “Cognition”, “Needs” and

“Emotions”, being the three internal sources of “Motivation”, are depicted within its box, while the fourth source of motivation – external events (Reeve, 2001) are integrated in the “Context” due to its meaning (link 4). Depending on the extent to which “Skills” are developed, students have certain “Motivation” to implement them in practice or not (Herron & Robinson, Jr., 1993) (link 5). Link 6 shows that owing to certain “Behaviour” which takes place in the “Context”, students come to a certain “Result” which is to be a new economic value that is the key determinant of entrepreneurship (Schumpeter, 1934; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Bygrave, 1993; Gartner, 1988; Drucker, 1993).

In its turn the “Result” and the new experience gained change students provoking new “Emotions” (Reeve, 2001; Dewey, 1974) (link 7); raising new “Needs” (Maslow, 1987) (link 8); stimulating them to reflect the course of things, review and evaluate, thus enhancing their “Cognition” (Kolb, 1984; Jarvis et al., 2003; Dewey, 1974; Kearney, 1999) (link 9) and causing new “Motivation” (Maslow, 1987; Dewey, 1974) (link 10). All these changes in students are what Peter Jarvis calls experiential reflective action learning, which, along with producing new skills and knowledge, can additionally be accompanied by other forms of learning involving attitudes, emotions and so on (Jarvis et al., 2003). The “Result” achieved and the experience gained have an active side which to some extent may change the objective conditions under which experiences are had (Dewey, 1974). That means that the results and new experience are able to cause changes in the “Context”.

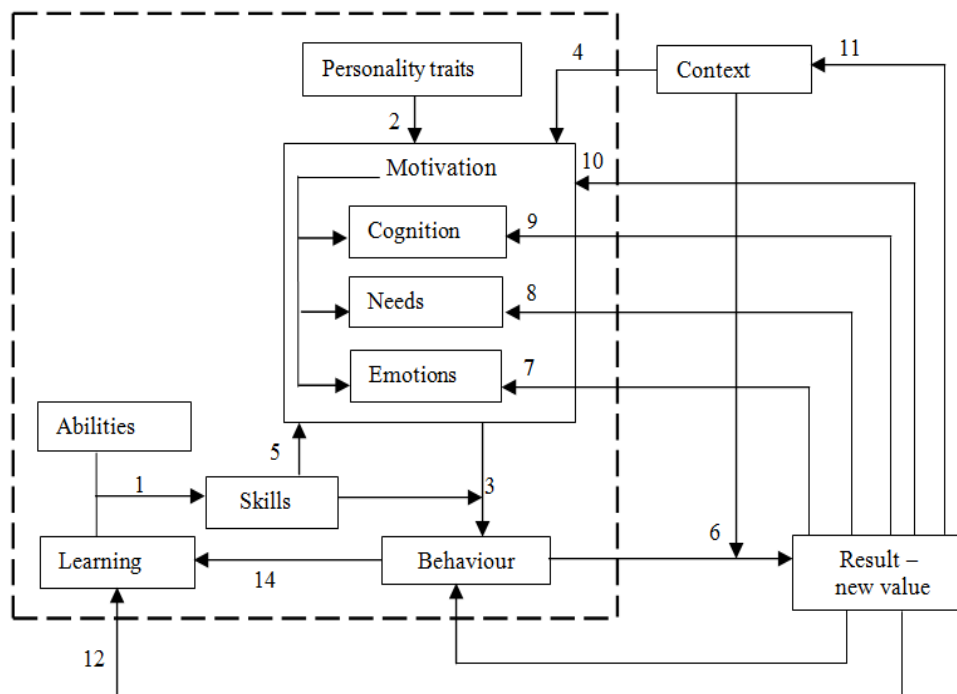


Figure 1. The holistic structural functional model of entrepreneurship (Oganisjana, 2010 b)

So, “The holistic structural functional model of entrepreneurship” not only features the interconnections among its components, but as well shows how students

may practice entrepreneurship while creating new values. In this model there are several closed learning cycles which represent different characters of experiential

learning (Kolb, 1984; Jarvis et al., 2003). The shortest learning cycle is “Behaviour” → “Result” → “Behaviour”, while the biggest one is “Context” → (“Cognition” → “Needs” → “Emotions”) → “Motivation” → “Behaviour” → “Results” → “Context”.

All the learning cycles in this model have a common component – “Behaviour” which speaks of its significance in promoting students' entrepreneurship since they have to undertake certain actions to realize opportunities into new values. Therefore the concept of entrepreneurship as one of the lifelong learning key competences ought to be complemented at least with “Behaviour” taking into account its crucial role (Oganisjana, 2010a) and as proposed also at ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) LLL (Lifelong learning) network “National strategies of Lifelong Learning” (Carlsen, 2009).

Competence-oriented higher education and the competitiveness of students

Greg Light and Roy Cox argue that there are five learning gaps (see LG 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 in Figure 2) of students of higher educational institutions (HEI):

- 1) recall and understanding;
- 2) understanding and ability;
- 3) ability and wanting to;
- 4) wanting to and actually doing and
- 5) actually doing and ongoing change.

These gaps lie between a continuum of different areas of learning – each encompassing the previous ones – laying out the extent of the professional challenge (Light & Cox, 2005).

The entrepreneurial potential of competence-oriented HE was analysed by projecting these five learning gaps on the largest learning cycle “Context” → (“Cognition” → “Needs” → “Emotions”) → “Motivation” → “Behaviour” → “Results” → “Context” of “The holistic structural functional model of entrepreneurship” (see Figure 2).

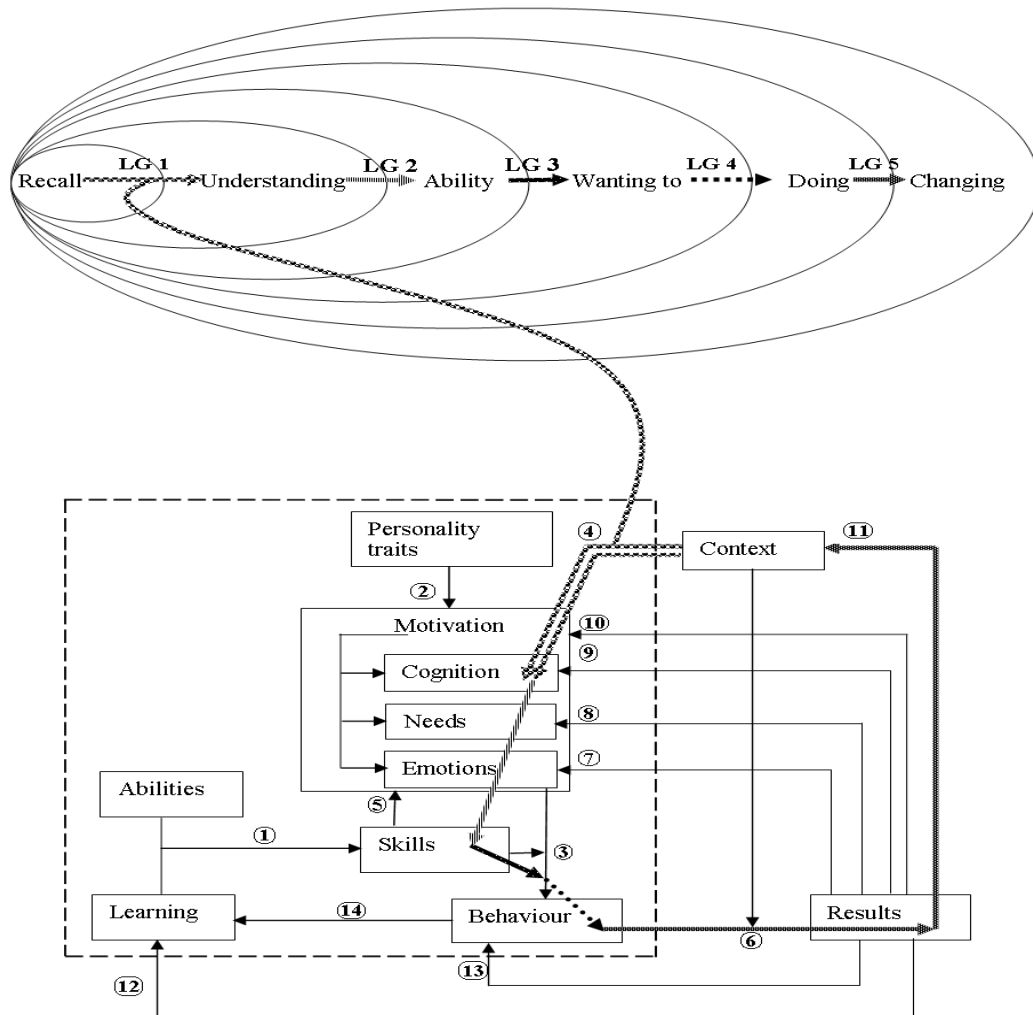


Figure 2. The projection of the five learning gaps (LG 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) of HEI students (Light & Cox, 2005) on the largest learning cycle of “The holistic structural functional model of entrepreneurship” (Oganisjana, 2010 b)

The first learning gap (LG 1) “between recall and understanding” concerns knowledge; on the model it is projected on the link “Context” → “Cognition” (see Figure 2). Quality education does not mean the mere acquisition of what already is incorporated in books and in the heads of teachers (Dewey, 1974) which makes students passive receptacles of words and ideas, but what does really matter is that students should listen, they should *hear*, and most important, they should receive and respond in an active, productive way (Fromm, 1976).

The second learning gap (LG 2) “between understanding and ability to do” concerns skills; on “The holistic structural functional model of entrepreneurship” it is projected on the link “Cognition” → “Skills”. It concerns a very significant aspect of any education – the ability of students to do something on their own using the knowledge acquired in studies. The teacher is to be a coordinator, colleague and facilitator (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994; Koke, 2005); that is especially crucial concerning the creation of an active entrepreneurial study environment (Gibb, 1993; Kearney, 1999; Fiet, 2000).

The third learning gap (LG 3) “between ability and wanting to” concerns attitude; on the model it is projected as the transition “Skills” → “Regulation point 3”, where students’ abilities to do – skills, meet their motivational and emotional readiness for undertaking certain actions if the study goals and content correspond to their needs, thus forming the basis of students’ attitude to the entire study process and environment.

The fourth learning gap (LG 4) “between wanting to and actually doing” concerns behaviour; on the model it is projected as the transition “Motivation” moderated by “Skills” → “Behaviour”. To overcome this learning gap, students have to transform what has been learnt into practice (Wing Yan Man, 2006; Oganisjana, 2006) and solve real life problems (Tan & Frank, 2006; Johnson et al., 1987). It will make students’ learning vital and enable them to become active participants in community life (Koke & Oganisjana, 2005).

The fifth learning gap (LG 5) “between actually doing and ongoing change” concerns the continuing changes, the ever-widening uncertainty and challenges of the life-world of “supercomplexity” of the twenty-first century into which graduates will have to make their own way (Barnett & Hallam, 1999). On “The holistic structural functional model of entrepreneurship” this learning gap is projected on the transition chain “Behaviour” → “Result” (new value) → “Context” showing that the result of students’ activities constantly gets tried out in the changing context; in its turn that influences students’ further perception of life, value system, emotions and motivation, needs and actions. In order to help students to overcome this learning

gap, it is important to construct the “curriculum of the future” (Young, 1998) which is not simply for the future but of the future (Light & Cox, 2005). Therefore it must reflect in its vision, design and implementation the “uncertainty, unpredictability and challengeability” (Barnett, 2000) which the “future” increasingly and more pervasively injects into the present. That means that the result of students’ work also should be related to the “future”; being created today they already should contain elements of belonging to the future. That is where the basis for innovation and business sophistication may be formed.

So, organising studies of HEI students in accordance with “The holistic structural functional model of entrepreneurship” all the learning gaps can be overcome. Meanwhile competence-oriented higher education has more limited potential for it, as it is mainly aimed at providing the acquisition of knowledge by students (LG 1) and the development of their skills (LG 2) and certain attitude (LG 3). It may not focus on the necessity to overcome the learning gaps of higher ranks (LG 4, 5) which are vital for students’ active and proactive participation in the constantly changing study and life environment full of uncertainty, new challenges and conflicts. As a result, students can hardly become very entrepreneurial, innovative and able for business sophistication which, combined together, make the basis of students’ competitiveness.

Conclusions

1. The concept of entrepreneurship encompasses more dimensions than a mechanical combination of entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and attitudes as it has been defined as one of the lifelong learning key competences. Entrepreneurship is a system of nine causally interrelated components. “The holistic structural functional model of entrepreneurship” discloses not only the causal links among its components but as well the mechanism of their functioning together as a whole. A crucial role belongs to the component of “Behaviour”.

2. Competence-oriented higher education, in the way competence is comprehended today, does not have the fullest capacity for developing students’ entrepreneurship. It cannot either be considered as quality higher education since it does not imply certain behaviours in study process which could bring to novelty and cause transformative effects and changes which make the basis for business sophistication and innovation. Therefore, competence-oriented higher education is not sufficient for raising students’ competitiveness. It speaks of the necessity to reconsider the goals and philosophy of higher education.

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Karine Oganisjana, Tatjana Koke

Ar kompetenciją ugdantis aukštasis mokslas skatina tautos kompetentingumą

Santrauka

XXI a. būdingi netikrumo sudėtingumo iššūkiai, kurie yra postmodernaus gyvenimo ypatumai. Esant pasaulinei ekonomikos krizei labai svarbu turėti aukštąjį išsilavinimą, kuris yra didžiulis studentų kompetencijos kėlimo potencialas, o šis sudaro visos tautos kompetencijos pagrindą. Kadangi studentų kompetencijos puoselėjimas glaudžiai susijęs su jų verslumo augimu, straipsnyje aptariami kai kurie daktaro disertacijos „Studentų verslumo ugdymas mokymo procese“ (Oganisjana, 2010 b) tyrimai, atkreipiamas dėmesys į šiuolaikinio aukštojo mokslo tikslą ugdyti studentų verslumą ir kompetenciją.

Verslumo tikslai tradiciškai susiję su ekonomika, verslu, vadyba, psichologija, sociologija ir antropologija. Tačiau šiuolaikiniame Europos švietime su mokymosi visą gyvenimą strategija verslumas ir jo ugdymas tapo ir pedagogikos tyrimo objektais. Literatūros analizė parodė, kad trūksta bendro verslumo supratimo, nes verslumas buvo apibrėžiamas labai įvairiai: procesas, individo savybės ir įvairi elgsena. Atsižvelgiant į problemas įvairovę ir naujumą, Latvijos pedagogikoje buvo taikoma kokybinė turinio analizė – išnagrinėtos 50 interpretacijos, susijusios su verslumu, imone, antrepreneryste, kurios pateiktos Europos, Amerikos, Azijos ir Australijos mokslininkų darbuose. Buvo išskirtos devynios verslumo sudedamosios dalys: asmenybės bruožai, gebėjimai, mokymasis, motyvacija, emocijos, poreikiai, pažinimas, elgsena.

Šios sudedamosios dalys rodo, kad verslumas turi daugiau elementų, kurie sudaro individo prigimtį, savybes, patyrimą, motyvaciją, elgseną negu verslumo žinios, gebėjimai, požiūriai. Tyrimas parodė, kad verslumas nėra tik atskirų sudėtinųjų dalių mechaninis junginys. Tai yra dinaminė sistema, nes jos elementai tarp savęs susiję ir remiasi sudėtinėmis funkcijomis.

Ryšys tarp verslumo elementų buvo tiriamas remiantis ekonomikos, vadybos, pedagogikos ir psichologijos teorijomis. Kadangi tyrimo tikslas buvo sukurti verslumo pedagoginę viziją, kai kurių aspektų analizė remėsi pedagogikos teorijomis. Buvo sukurtas holistinis struktūrinis funkcinis modelis, kuriame atskleidžiami šie aspektai:

- 1) verslumo struktūra;
- 2) mechanizmas, kaip verslumo elementai veikia kaip sistema;
- 3) kaip kuriama nauja ekonominė vertė, kuri yra pagrindinis verslumo veiksnys;
- 4) kaip galima ugdyti studentų verslumą vykstant studijų procesui remiantis jų patyrimu ir žiniomis apie realaus gyvenimo problemas.

Į modelį įeina šešiolika uždaru mokymosi ciklų, kurie sudaro bet kurio eksperimentinio mokymosi pagrindą. Trumpiausias mokymosi ciklas yra „Elgsena“ → „Rezultatas“ → „Elgsena“.

Šis ciklas rodo, kad studentų elgsena skatina rezultatą, kuris sukelia naują elgseną, o elgsenos skirtumas yra tai, ką jie tuo metu išmoko. Didžiausias mokymosi ciklas yra šis: „Kontekstas“ → „Pažinimas“ → „Poreikiai“ → „Jausmai“ → „Motyvacija“ → „Elgsena“ → „Rezultatai“ → „Kontekstas“. Šį ciklą sudaro visi verslumo komponentai. Jį galima interpretuoti taip: kai kontekstu suteikiama galimybė, studentai gali būti motyvuoti ją įgyvendinti: pirmiausia įvertina idėją remdamiesi savo pažinimu, po to lygina potencialo rezultatus su savo poreikiais ir pagaliau priima tą idėją. Tada atliekami tam tikri veiksmai (elgsena), kurie, kaip jau minėta, grindžiami gebėjimais. Studentų elgesys sukuria tam tikrus rezultatus, kurie turi tapti naujomis ekonominėmis vertybėmis. Šie rezultatai bandomi ir įvertinami realaus gyvenimo sąlygomis. Dėl šio proceso gali atsirasti nauja motyvacija, pažinimas, poreikiai ir emocijos. Tai ir yra eksperimentinis mokymasis, kuris gali išugdyti naujus gebėjimus ir žinias. Visa tai skatina kitas mokymosi formas.

Holistinis verslumo modelis yra universalus, nes jį galima taikyti lavinant įvairaus amžiaus studentus. Tačiau tyrimas susijęs su aukštuoju mokslu, todėl modelis buvo taikytas sprendžiant šios srities problemas. Tiriant aukštojo mokslo galimybes ugdyti studentų verslumą, buvo taikytas *Greg Light ir Roy Cox* penkiąs mokymosi etapus aukščiausiame mokymosi cikle: „Kontekstas“ → („Pažinimas“ → „Poreikiai“ → „Emocijos“) → „Motyvacija“ → „Elgsena“ → „Rezultatai“ → „Kontekstas“.

Pirmasis mokymosi etapas susijęs su žiniomis. Jis atitinka segmentą „Kontekstas“ → „Pažinimas“.

Antrasis mokymosi etapas susijęs su gebėjimais ir paremtas „Pažinimo“ → „Gebėjimų“ pagrindu.

Trečiasis mokymosi etapas susijęs su požiūriu ir planuojamas pagal pereinamąjį santykį „Gebėjimai“ → „Derinimo taškas 3“.

Ketvirtasis mokymosi etapas susijęs su elgsena. Jis atitinka segmentą „Motyvacija“, paremtą santykiu „Gebėjimai“ → „Elgsena“.

Penktasis mokymosi etapas susijęs su besitęsiančiais pokyčiais ir planuojamas kaip pereinamoji grandis „Elgsena“ → „Rezultatas“ → „Kontekstas“.

Šiame etape ugdoma nauja vertybė, kuri yra pagrindinis verslumo požymis.

Taigi, jeigu aukštasis mokslas orientuojasi į studentų kompetencijų ugdymą (kaip kompetencija yra suvokiama šiuolaikinėje visuomenėje, t. y. žinių gebėjimų ir požiūrio derinys), toks aukštasis mokslas apima pirmuosius tris etapus ir mažai prisideda prie studentų verslumo ugdymo. Jis tiesiog nerodo veiksmų, kurie sukeltų naujų rezultatų, naujų ekonominių vertybių. Pagrindinių mokymosi visą gyvenimą kompetencijų sąvoką pakeitė ir naujus sudedamuosius elementus įvedė Arne Carlsen (2009), kuris savo mintis išdėstė „Mokymosi visą gyvenimą nacionalinėje strategijoje“. Elgsenos svarba – tai nuolatinių požiūrių era aukštajame moksle, kuris turi ne tik daryti įtaką pokyčiams ir prisitaikyti prie jų, bet ir gebėti kurti naujus.

Raktažodžiai: kompetencija, verslumas, kompetencijos ugdymas aukštajame moksle, holistinis požiūris į verslumą.

The article has been reviewed.

Received in May, 2011; accepted in February, 2012.