

METHODOLOGICAL PREPARATION AND PEDAGOGICAL MASTERY IN THE PROCESS OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT TEACHING

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Abstract. The strategic security environment is characterized by high dynamism and growing unpredictability, and it is obvious that every member of society needs to be able to understand strategic problems, both individually and supranationally, and to be able to make informed strategic decisions that will ensure the achievement of certain education goal – the transfer of knowledge between adolescents and older generations. The relevance of the study is in connection with the successful achievement of the objectives of individual and collective military training, and specifically the training in Strategic Management, as well as in connection with the successful acquisition of the officer's profession. The subject of research is the relationship education-pedagogical mastery-strategic management, while the object is a part of the methodological pedagogical approach implemented in the Strategic Management academic subject on the example of the National Military University of Bulgaria. In this regard, the paper presents exhibition and demonstration of some of used good teaching practices and experience.

Keywords: education; methodological preparation; pedagogical mastery; strategic management

Introduction

Education is a major driver of society which creates the image of individual and humanity through the acquired knowledge, skills, qualifications. The correct comprehension and assimilation of the own goals and interests of each student, expressed through individuality in society, are manifested through the comprehension and assimilation of the goals and interests of the society itself. As an activity directly related to benefit of an individual, education has a specific goal - an impact that takes place between adolescents and older generations which is associated with a change in thinking.

The relevance of the study is in connection with the successful achievement of the objectives of individual and collective military training, and specifically the training in Strategic Management, as well as in connection with the successful acquisition of the officer's profession. Research goal is the presentation of

methodological preparation and pedagogical mastery in the process of strategic management teaching on the example of the National Military University, Bulgaria. The subject of research is the relationship education-pedagogical mastery-strategic management, while the object is a part of the methodological pedagogical approach implemented in the Strategic Management academic subject.

The methodology of the scientific study uses a variety of tools and procedures, namely:

- identification of a research problem and substantiation of its relevance;
- analysis of historical sources on the relationship education-pedagogical mastery-strategic management;
- analysis and synthesis of theoretical experience on methodological preparation and pedagogical mastery;
- exposition and demonstration of used good practices in teaching Strategic Management.

In order to derive the presented scientific knowledge, in the development of the scientific research a large volume of scientific and legislative sources related to the pedagogical mastery and training of teachers, as well as the teaching methods used were studied. They can be systematized in several areas:

- Regarding the methodological training of the teacher and legislative features (Law on Higher Education 2018; Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria 2019; National strategy for development of pedagogical staff 2014; National plan for implementation of the activities under the National Strategy for development of the pedagogical staff 2014 – 2020, (Ordinance on the state requirements for acquiring the Teacher professional qualification 2016; Ordinance 12 on the status and professional development of teachers, principals and other pedagogical specialists 2016).

- Regarding learning process, teaching methodology and the pedagogical mastery (Thorndike 2014; Cochran-Smith, M. 2006; Gospodinov, B. 2008; Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2021; Online Etymology Dictionary 2001 – 2021; Andreev 1996).

- Regarding scientific statements on education as a form of human cognitive activity (Cunningham 2009; Oxford Dictionary 2021; Madigan, O'Hara 1992; Matlin 2009; Cherry 2012).

- Regarding Strategic Management area (Air war gateway College 2013; Kim, Mauborgne 2005, Machiavelli 1560; Maurice 1984; Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, Lampel 1998; Musashi 2005; Sun-Tzu 2003).

1. Education as a form of human cognitive activity and its connection with making justified strategic decisions today

Education, as a form of activity through which adolescents are consciously guided, has existed as a fact since ancient times. For a long time, pedagogy has

been developing and existing as a practice-oriented activity. In the 18th century, Jan Amos Comenius systematized pedagogical knowledge and practice at the work "The Great Didactic" and presented the primary purpose of education – spiritual reproduction and improvement of the individual, which arouse the necessity to understand education as individual and social need. Although the modern education is based on the idea of preserving the individuality of the learner, as well as considering and respecting learner's needs and interests, it must reflect and be in direct dependence with the interests and needs of society. Learner's activity is directly related to learner's needs and reflects the change in the development of personality. Increasing learner's activity is the goal of pedagogical activity, which is pursued by the teacher.

Modern complex threats facing the world require common policies and targeted actions, as a priority for ensuring peace and security in Europe and in the world, so the country's foreign policy should contribute to world peace and stability, for the development of good neighbourliness and trust between the countries. There is an urgent need for greater coherence in action on the common foreign and security policy and for working in partnership through active international cooperation.

The strategic security environment is characterized by high dynamism and growing unpredictability. The changes in it depend on the increased influence of non-military (asymmetric) risks and threats, typical for the beginning of the 21st century. Building a common political, economic, educational, social, defence and legal space in Europe can only be a reality through integration, active bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the pointed above areas. It is obvious that every member of society needs to be able to understand strategic problems, both individually and nationally and supranationally, and to be able to make informed strategic decisions that will ensure the achievement of certain results.

The mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through reasoning, personal experience and use of human senses can be divided into conscious and unconscious, concrete or abstract, intuitive and conceptual and can be defined as *cognitive activity*. It includes processes such as getting to know, paying attention, understanding, using speech memorizing, reasoning, judging, evaluating, making decisions, solving problems. The word "cognitive" comes from the Latin word "cognition" and means "knowledge", and the term "cognitive process" is defined as a process that is related to the content and concepts. The Oxford Dictionary (2021) defines it as "the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience and the senses and as perception, sensation, idea or intuition as a result of the process of cognition". Regarding the learning process and the process of making informed strategic decisions, the ability of a person to understand and discover the meaning of performing certain activities such as reading, listening, reviewing, observing, analysing we define as cognitive ability or cognition.

First Aristotle paid the attention to the cognitive process focusing on the impact of human experience on consciousness. The type of mental processes described as cognitive are largely influenced by research that had successfully used this paradigm in the past by Thomas Aquinas, who divided the study of human behaviour into cognitive (how we know the world) and affective (how we understand the world through the prism of feelings and emotions).

Centuries later, Wilhelm Wundt, Hermann Ebbinghaus, Mary Calkins, William James and Jean Piaget contributed to the study of the human cognitive process. Wilhelm Wundt created the idea of introspection, which reflected the feelings of an individual. Using introspection, the subject has the opportunity to describe his feelings in the most objective way possible. Cognitive research conducted by Hermann Ebbinghaus (1850 – 1909) studied the function and capacity of human memory. He conducted an experiment with his own personality, consisting of making more than 2,000 combinations of letters, as well as non-existent words, in order to explore the human capacity to learn them. Ebbinghaus also hypothesized the number of words that could affect our ability to learn and remember and was the first scientist to speak of a “learning curve” and a “forgetting curve” (Cunningham 2009). Mary Calkins (1863 – 1930) focused on the capacity of human memory and the effect that information had on the relevance of memory. It was closely related to the mentioned study and experiments conducted by Ebbinghaus. (Madigan, O’Hara 1992) William James (1842 – 1910) focused his research on human experience and examined various aspects of the cognitive process such as perception, memory, thinking and attention (Matlin 2009). Jean Piaget (1896 – 1980) believed that people are unique because of their ability to perform symbolic abstract reasoning (Cherry 2012). His work can be compared to that of Lev Vygotsky, Sigmund Freud and Eric Erickson. Piaget is known for studying cognitive development in children and described the stages that they went through during their intellectual development.

When the mind generalizes, it draws similarities from many examples, allows the simplification of thinking and the subsequent transition of thinking to a higher level. Today we find the phenomenal success of the cognitive approach in its dominance of a basic model in the modern sciences oriented towards the study of human behaviour and the process of making informed strategic decisions.

2. Methodological preparation and pedagogical mastery in the process of Strategic Management teaching

The methodological preparation of the teacher is related to preparing of academic curricula, which allows to build more correctly the educational content of the individual topics, as well as to better organize the overall pedagogical activity in the process of teaching. In this regard, the main goals of the teacher are aimed at forming the required for the educational qualification degree knowledge (theoretical and factual), skills (cognitive and practical) and competencies (independence and

responsibility, ability to learn, communicative and social competencies, professional competencies) (Law on Higher Education 2018; Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria 2019; National strategy for development of pedagogical staff 2014). A number of countries have introduced comprehensive support systems to help beginning teachers in their early years in the profession, which may include mentoring – the distribution for each beginning teacher of an experienced teacher specially trained as a mentor, so the mentor can provide emotional and professional support and guidelines.

The question “What knowledge, attitudes, behaviour and skills should teachers have?” is a subject of many debates in the scientific community. This is understandable, as teachers are entrusted with the transmission of beliefs, attitudes, society’s deontology, information and wisdom to the young generation. In this regard, when acquiring a pedagogical qualification, teachers’ knowledge, skills and abilities on several main areas must be taken into account (National plan for implementation of the activities under the National Strategy for development of the pedagogical staff 2014 – 2020, (Ordinance on the state requirements for acquiring the Teacher professional qualification 2016; Ordinance 12 on the status and professional development of teachers, principals and other pedagogical specialists 2016; *Thorndike 1914*; *Cochran-Smith 2006*; *Gospodinov 2008*; *Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2021*; *Online Etymology Dictionary 2001 – 2021*; *Andreev 1996*):

- basic knowledge on Pedagogy, Psychology, Philosophy of Education, History of Education, Sociology, Management, Ethics, Deontology;
- comprehensive and thorough factual and theoretical knowledge on Strategic Management;
- pedagogical abilities for organizing learning process, i.e. knowledge and practice in making statements, formulating instructions, tasks and explanations;
- comprehensive and thorough factual and theoretical knowledge in teaching methods and teaching methodology, acquaintance with technologies and tools for modern teaching;
- pedagogical skills for transferring knowledge between the different scientific areas;
- management skills for creative thinking and applying alternative methods and ways of action in familiar and unfamiliar situations and environments, i.e. wide range of cognitive and practical skills for solving complex problems;
- management skills for controlling and supporting learners through demonstrating the implementation of strategic thinking and strategic management;
- management skills for evaluation and motivated learners’ assessment.

Therefore, the pedagogical work is masterful when activates the creativity of the person and contributes to the student to rise from an object of activity to a subject of own activity. The pedagogical specialist must possess several elements of pedagogical mastery, as follows:

- to be a specialist in a scientific field;
- to transfer socially significant knowledge;
- to influence personality;
- to be a good psychologist;
- to demonstrate mastery in discipline, control, responsibility, organization, communication;
- to demonstrate mastery of the body and emotions;
- to motivate, care and activate learners.

3. Sample Practices in Strategic Management at National Military University of Bulgaria

The National Military University dates back to the autumn of 1878, when on September 1 in Philippopolis (now Plovdiv) the Imperial Russian Commissioner in Bulgaria, Adjutant General Prince Alexander Mikhailovich Dondukov-Korsakov signed order on the Military Administration of the Bulgarian Land Army and appointed the first command staff of the Sofia Military School. Since its establishment until today, the oldest military educational institution in Bulgaria has trained and educated graduates for the needs of the Armed Forces. Its superiors were prominent Bulgarian officers, generals and graduates who have held important government positions.

The main tasks that Vasil Levski National Military University performs are:

- Training of cadets for acquiring the bachelor's educational qualification degree;
- Training of students for acquiring the bachelor's and master's educational qualification degree;
- Training of doctoral students;
- Training of servicemen in postgraduate qualification courses;
- Carrying out scientific and applied research;
- Publishing, information, cultural and sports activities.

Apart from them, the Vasil Levski National Military University also performs additional tasks assigned by the Ministry of Defence in the interest of the country's defence, such as: training and raising the qualification of sergeants from Bulgarian Army and training of servicemen for the needs of Bulgarian Army.

The Strategic Management, as an academic subject, is intended for training students in the bachelor's educational qualification degree in the Business Logistics and Security Logistics specialties and for training students in the master's educational qualification degree in the Business Management specialty.

The curriculum includes six topics. The first topic Origin of the Strategy discusses the basics of strategy and strategic management and provides a historical overview of military and business strategies. Ancient Chinese

Japanese and Byzantine strategy theories, theories of European Renaissance, strategic thought from 18th – 19th century and American influence on strategic thought are submitted and analysed. In the second part of the topic the main strategic schools in business are discussed (Air war gateway College 2013; Kim and Mauborgne 2005; Machiavelli 1560; Maurice 1984; Musashi 2005; Sun-Tzu 2003). Topic two Strategy and strategic management examines the concept of management, the functional areas of modern management, the concept of strategy and the concept of strategic management. Topic three examines the business environment of the organization. Topic four shows the ways to define the goals, mission and vision of the organization and introduces learners to the concept of social responsibility. Topic five presents traditional models for strategic market analysis and strategy selection, as well the modern ones. Topic six summarizes the types of business strategies and the formulation of business strategies.

During the preparation of the curriculum and preparation of the study material, the diversity of the existing theoretical knowledge and practical experience was studied and contacts with leading authors in the field of strategic management were initiated. One of them was Professor Bruce Ahlstrand, co-author of a world-leading textbook on strategic management training in the United States and Canada¹ (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, Lampel 1998).

In 2017, the “Genesis of Strategic Management” was published in English, which collects all the topics discussed and is aimed at both the Bulgarian audience and cadets and students. The research is made available worldwide through Bookboon, an online-based e-book publishing company. “Genesis of Strategic Management” is an unique book for the Bulgarian science, through which many world-famous business organizations advertised themselves as follows: Osram, Deloitte, Skoda, Graduate Program Axa France, Maersk, University of Groningen the Netherlands, American Online LIGS University, Grant Thornton, Alcatellucent, Maastricht University, Norwegian Business School, Volvo.

Conclusion

The presented work and the demonstrated practices and experience in Strategic Management teaching are in accordance with the mission of Vasil Levski National Military University - to build its graduates morally, mentally and physically, to include them in the ideals of patriotism, duty and honour, to form them. as individuals and leaders with established leadership qualities, able to develop and apply scientific knowledge, to manage public and special structures in peacetime and crises and to participate in national and multinational projects for maintaining security, preserving peace and developing society. At the same time, as teachers, lecturers and people guiding, educating and training the young generation, we often ask ourselves: „Why to become a teacher and why methodological preparation

and pedagogical mastery in the process of teaching strategic management is so important?“. The answers can be different:

- to facilitate the transfer of knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another;
- to support the building of a value system and orientation in the young generation;
- to mentor, care and direct learners to the adoption of socially significant knowledge;
- to build is long-term strategically oriented learners' behaviour;
- to monitor the development of young people and to influence this development;
- to increase the motivation and satisfaction of young people;
- to support and encourage the implementation of the strategic concept of lifelong learning;
- to support the professional realization of young people.

NOTES

1. Prof. Bruce Ahlstrand kindly helped to clarify the content of the exercise classes and enrich them with examples, case studies, game situations, as part of the classes are conducted according to his methodology, according to a manual sent by him personally.

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