



VILNIUS GEDIMINAS
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IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL COMPETENCES IN THE CONTEXT OF LIFELONG LEARNING: ATTITUDE OF HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHERS

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GROUP OF EDUCATIONAL COMPETENCIES

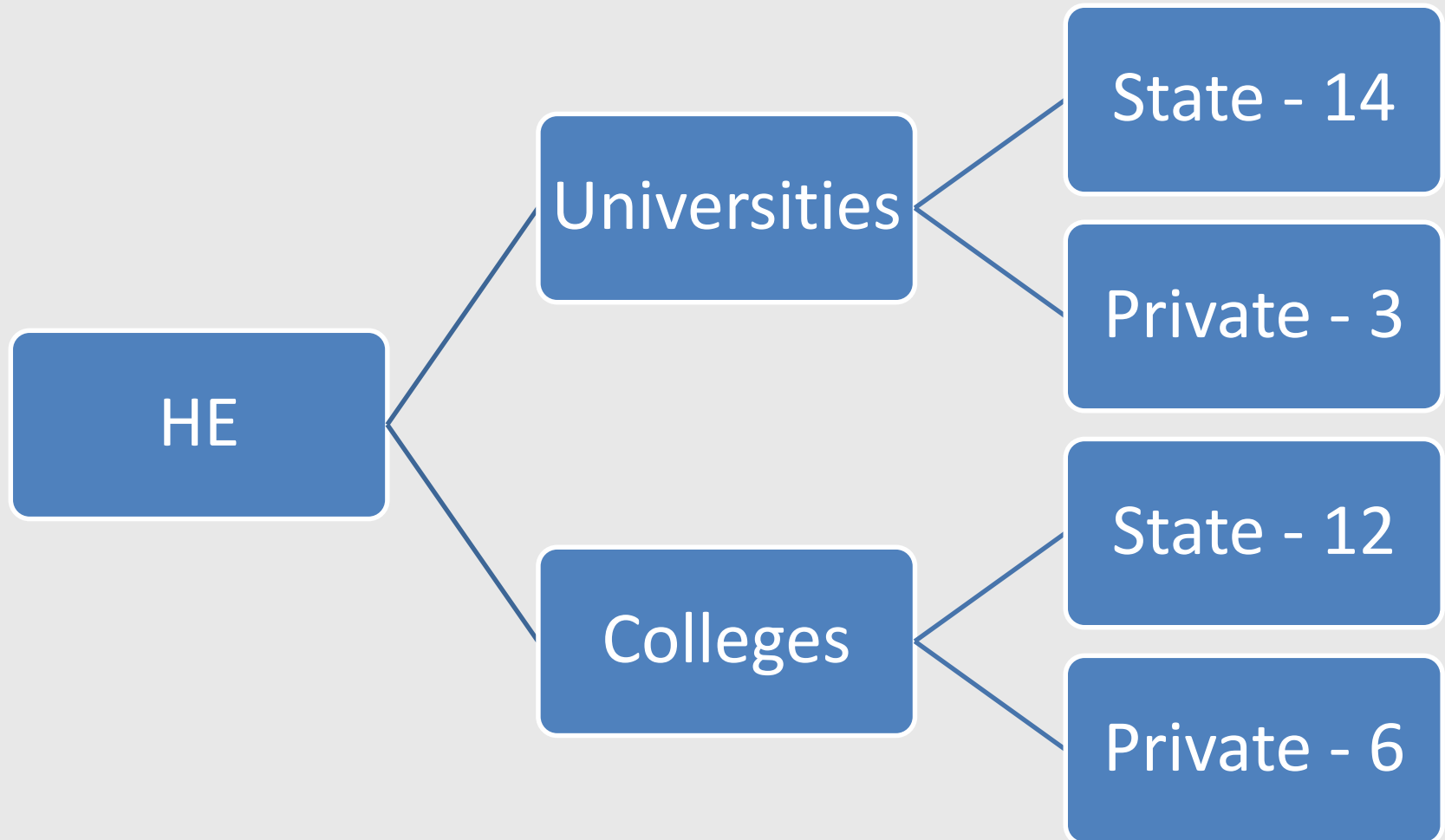
Organises and delivers training courses for higher education teachers on higher education didactics that cover teaching and assessment methods, student-centred study strategies



- Provides higher education teachers with individual consultations on relevant educational issues,
- promotes exchange of the good experience among higher education teachers



System of HE in Lithuania



The aim of the article

To analyse the need of higher education teachers to improve their educational competences in the lifelong learning context.

The following objectives are set:

1. To analyse theoretical aspects of competence improvement seeking to present the strategic attitude of HE institutions towards the need to improve their teachers' competences.
2. To analyse the attitude of HE teachers towards establishment of conditions for improvement of teachers' competences and the importance of the need to improve their educational competences lifelong.

Methodology (1)

The survey was conducted in universities and colleges from September to November in 2015 included 140 respondents.

The questions were answered by 56.5 % university and 43.5 % college teachers, who represented 6 scientific fields.

Methodology (2)

The research methods included: analysis of scholarly literature, regulatory documents on education; analysis of strategic documents on higher education, qualitative content analysis

(qualitative information obtained from the responses to open-ended questions were analysed and systemised distinguishing categories, subcategories).

Strategic documents of universities

The greatest attention:

- teacher mobility and sharing good practice with foreign teachers,
- continuous development of teacher competences,
- the system of teacher motivation,
- collaboration, sense of community, innovations, application of methods developing creativity and innovativeness in the study process, as well as improvement of foreign language skills.

The obtained data confirm that the educational competence of teachers receives greater attention in the strategic documents of Lithuanian state universities than in those of private ones.

Strategic documents of colleges (1)

Firstly, no data regarding qualification development was found in the documents open to public.

Secondly, some colleges follow paradigm changes, i.e. develop learner-centred system of education, set great challenges to promote internationalisation, develop distance studies, apply innovative teaching/learning strategies and ensure flexible and diverse studies.

Strategic documents of colleges (2)

Thirdly, the competences to be developed are clearly defined in some documents that include not only research, educational and subject-specific competences but also some other competences (for example application of problem-based learning, general abilities, learning technologies, etc.).

A big number of colleges also set themselves the objective of continuous professional development of their academic staff.

Conditions for improvement of HE teachers' educational competences

1. Attitudes and actions of HE schools
2. Attitudes and actions of HE teachers
3. Attitudes and actions of organisers of training courses

1. Attitudes and actions of HE schools

- Financial resources
- Reduction of workload
- The position of authorities on HE teachers
- Internal actions of HE schools
- Institutional motivation of HE teachers
- Improvement of competences at international level

2. Attitudes and actions of HE teachers

The teacher's personality: i.e. on intrinsic motivation for doing this and on motivation to become a HE teacher

3. Attitudes and actions of organisers of training courses

- Possibilities of career development courses and their promotion:
 - to improve access to such courses, diversify topics, analyse their demand and provide more information.
 - The supply of such trainings should be systemic and consistent and available not only at the national level but also within HE schools.

Lifelong learning

The competence of lifelong learning is understood not only as an interest in innovations or lifelong learning but also as ability to encourage others to do the same employing own example:

“Willing to learn lifelong and able to encourage others to learn.”

Conclusions (1)

The research revealed the documents adopted in the Republic of Lithuania focus on acquisition of teachers' educational competences and their improvement but insufficient attention is directed towards educational competences of HE teachers.

Conclusions (2)

The analysis of the long-term strategic plans of HE institutions (universities, colleges) reveals insufficient attention to improvement of teacher competences.

The research and subject-specific competences obviously attract more attention compared to educational ones.

Conclusions (3)

The research revealed that authorities of HE establishments have the largest share of responsibility for establishment of conditions for improvement of educational competences. According to the informants, their salary should be higher, the workload should be revised and motivation system should be created.

Conclusions (4)

Though participants in higher education perceive the significance of lifelong learning, they think that it also partially depends on the teacher's personality and on continuity of proposed seminars.