

Teaching and the Pedagogical Training of University Teaching Staff – Practice and Opinions under Slovenian Higher Education Legislation

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Abstract

This study examines the teaching in higher education in Slovenia, with an emphasis on the pedagogical training and pedagogical qualification of university teaching staff. Various aspects of the latter were examined among 513 respondents. The results showed that university teachers attribute significant importance to *pedagogical work* (the term used in Slovenian higher education legislation), yet nearly half of them had never been involved in any kind of pedagogical courses. The other half of the respondents had participated in various kinds of pedagogical courses (i.e. ‘adult education’ or a pedagogical study programme for the primary and secondary level of education) and only 31.4% of all respondents had participated in *higher education pedagogical training*. At a higher education institution with well-defined criteria in the field of pedagogical work, the percentage of teaching staff without any pedagogical education is lower than in an institution with less defined conditions. In recent years, a growing number of various higher education pedagogical training programmes have been offered.

Keywords: teaching in higher education, higher education pedagogical training, pedagogical qualification

Introduction

University teachers¹ perform two basic activities, i.e. research and teaching. Although both activities play a central role in higher education (HE), in most European countries teachers are not required to obtain a certificate of teaching competencies. However, the quality of university teaching has come under focus in recent years, and the need to improve teaching skills and pedagogical thinking is now acknowledged to be essential (Postareff, Lindblom-Ylänne and Nevgi 2007, 29). Nevertheless, many higher education institutions (HEIs) pay inadequate attention to teaching in comparison to research (European Commission 2013). The situation is quite the same in Slovenia, at both the level of national legislation and other institutional criteria, and at a practical level.

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In this study, the importance of teaching, pedagogical training and the pedagogical qualification of university teaching staff will be presented, with an emphasis on the legislation that affects Slovenian HE, as the basis for formulating the research questions. In the second part, the results of empirical research conducted in 2013 will be presented, i.e. the importance attributed to the pedagogical work of university teachers, the type of pedagogical courses taken, the institutions where they worked and to what extent in the last 10 years, the status of 'probationary lectures' and the satisfaction of teachers with the method of assessing pedagogical qualifications at their respective institutions.

Teaching and the pedagogical training of university teaching staff

The importance of the pedagogical component in the professional development of university teaching staff is highlighted by different authors (von Humboldt 1970, Fielden 1998, Cross 2001, Lueddeke 2003, D'Andrea and Gosling 2005, Marentič Požarnik and Šteh 2006, Grača 2008, Rosado Pinto 2008, Marentič Požarnik 2009 etc.). Some of them refer to the modern phenomenon of mass higher education and, as a consequence, to the need for (additional) systematic pedagogical training of university teachers (Lueddeke 2003, Rosado Pinto 2008, Marentič Požarnik 2009). In Cross' (2001) opinion, the university favours the production of knowledge at the expense of teaching which inevitably negatively affects progress and development in teaching. The absence of the pedagogical development of university teachers often results in maintenance of the old methods of teaching, which often focus on the teacher instead of the needs of students and on the subject matter instead of the transformation of knowledge (Pleschová et al. 2012). As a result of the increased focus on quality and responsibility in HE, the larger and more diverse population of students (Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley 2009), international competition and 'doing more with less', the 'professionalisation' of teaching practice in HE is becoming more important (Lueddeke 2003).

The EU high-level group² on the modernisation of HE recommends, among other things, mandatory certified training for professors and other teaching staff (European Commission 2013). In this context, Marentič Požarnik (1998) states that the criteria for an appointment should be a key factor in improving teaching skills; however, they have to be strictly complied with.

Pedagogical work³ and the training of teaching staff in the context of Slovenian higher education legislation

In Slovenia, the system of appointing teaching staff to positions strongly emphasises the importance of scientific-research and professional work, while the system is not so stimulative of pedagogical qualification (Šarić and Košir 2012). We agree with Marentič Požarnik (2009, 346) who states that »there is no explicit national policy to encourage the necessary changes in promoting the quality of teaching [...],

the development of teaching competencies of university staff is not yet being regarded as an important ingredient of the curricular reform«.

On the basis of the Slovenian Higher Education Act (OG RS 2012) and the Minimum Standards for the Appointment of Higher Education Teachers, Researchers and Faculty Assistants at Higher Education Institutions (OG RS 2010; hereinafter: the Minimum Standards), which give elements for assessing the pedagogical qualification of a candidate (Article 23), HEIs formulate their own criteria for the appointment of university teaching staff. We analysed these documents in detail. Article 33 of the Higher Education Act states that the mandatory component of the professional *HE study programme* is practical education in a working environment; research activity is not particularly discussed. In the *university study programme* either practical education or participation in research work are mandatory, while projects in a working environment or basic applied or development research tasks are compulsory components in the *master's study programme*.⁴ Although the Higher Education Act does not specifically define the pedagogical work of the teaching staff for each level and type of the above-mentioned programmes, it can be argued that a greater emphasis is given to pedagogical work at lower levels of study programmes and lower levels of education – ISCED 1997 (UNESCO 2012). On the other hand, research work is an important component of the university and especially the master's study programme.

A review and analysis of the relevant institutional criteria which regulate appointments to positions in the four Slovenian universities, i.e. the University of Ljubljana (UL), the University of Maribor (UM), the University of Primorska (UPR) and the University of Nova Gorica (UNG),⁵ has shown that there are clear criteria for evaluating research work, while the area of pedagogical qualification presents certain ambiguity. Research work is given a noticeably bigger emphasis than pedagogical work. The universities' criteria for appointment to *associate professor* allocate, on average, at least 25% of points for pedagogical work (UL, UM and UPR), while over 50% is allocated to research work (UL and UPR), and in the case of the UM 58%. For a *full professor*, the universities' criteria allocate at least 22% (UL and UPR) or 25% (UM) of points to pedagogical work, with well over 50% (UM) or 55.5% (UL and UM) of points being allocated for research.⁶ In the process of appointment to teaching positions, only the UPR's criteria require certificates of participation in "Pedagogical-andragogical training for higher education teachers and faculty assistants of the UPR", or other pedagogical training or 'adult education'. The UPR's criteria also include a list of relevant evidence or certificates. This requirement was not found with the other universities. The importance of student evaluations is stressed in all the universities.

Marentič Požarnik (2009) writes that the UL's criteria, adopted in 2001 (UL 2001), included very precise criteria for research work and publications in specific journals. "Pedagogical qualification" was analytically explained too; however, the most important evidence required by new teachers was a '*probationary lesson*'. Further, "pedagogical points" could be gained by mentoring (master's or doctoral level) or

writing textbooks and other material for students. No points were given for attending courses to improve teaching or for any other evidence of actual improvements in teaching. The situation is substantially unchanged in the university criteria introduced by the new Minimum Standards in 2010, Article 11 of which requires a demonstration of pedagogical qualification by means of a '*probationary lecture*'. The UL and the UPR criteria only allocate 1 point for attending programmes and courses to improve teaching (at the university or in the international area), which is the lowest among all categories within the pedagogical activity.⁷ Despite the provisions of Article 23 of the Minimum Standards, the UM criteria do not contain a category for participation in pedagogical training; it was also not part of the UNG's institutional criteria. In all institutional criteria within the category of pedagogical work, extensive sections are dedicated to the preparation of textbooks and similar materials, mentoring, co-mentoring etc.

Nevertheless, in the last few years there has been progress with *HE pedagogical training* in Slovenia. In 2012, the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency accredited a renewed training study programme "The Basics of Higher Education Didactics"⁸ and in 2013 multiple implementations were approved in the context of the project "Quality – University of Ljubljana, 2012–2015" (UL 2013). So far⁹ the programme has been implemented three times (40 contact hours) and been attended by 47 participants who fulfilled all the obligations (Marentič Požarnik 2014). This project offers other courses for university teachers, i.e. rhetoric and e-learning for teaching staff, teamwork, student evaluations etc. These kinds of courses, seminars and programmes have been organised since the late 1970s (mainly) by the Centre for Educational Development at the Faculty of Arts, the UL, but remained voluntary and without official accreditation up until 1999 (Marentič Požarnik 2009) when the 48-hour course "Foundations of teaching in higher education" was accredited. According to Marentič Požarnik (2009), the amount of independent study time participants needed to complete the course assignments varied from 10 to over 30 hours, with the average being about half of the contact time (24 hours versus 48 hours or 72 hours for the whole course). As Marentič Požarnik (2009) writes, the courses may have been attended by 5 percent of the eligible teaching staff. However, the submission of the certificate as part of habilitation – documents to support promotion – has not conferred any benefit or only been allocated a minimal percentage of points. At the UM, workshops in the field of Moodle e-learning, core competencies (learning outcomes and assessment of students) and core competencies of university teaching staff were already carried out in 2014 (UM 2014). The UPR offers "Pedagogical-andragogical training for higher education teachers and faculty assistants of the University of Primorska" at its Faculty of Education, usually once a year (Tkalcíč 2014). For the UNG, we managed to find some data for the 2012/13 study year on workshops as part of the renovation of the university's electronic system (including the Moodle system), also intended for the teaching staff (UNG 2013b).

In addition to the above-mentioned courses, certain pedagogical training programmes and courses are also offered in other HEIs in Slovenia, but it was impossible to obtain accurate data due to the large number of private HEIs in Slovenia. With the survey presented below, some detailed information and data on teaching and the pedagogical training of university teachers in Slovenia were acquired.

The study

Conducted in May 2013, the study investigated the status of the pedagogical work and pedagogical training of teaching staff in Slovenian HE in the last 10 years, as observed by the teaching staff. On this basis, the online *Questionnaire on pedagogical training of higher education teachers and associates in Slovenia* was prepared. The initial questionnaire was tested on a sample of 24 respondents, and the results and findings derived from univariate statistics were used to further refine the questionnaire.

Population and sample

According to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 8,763 university teaching staff were employed by Slovenian HEIs in the 2012/13 academic year (SORS, 2013). The latter represents the population of our survey since sampling was not conducted. The list consisted of 5,650 e-mail addresses of units from all four Slovenian universities and from some private HEIs for which we were able to obtain e-mail addresses. In total, 513 respondents answered the entire questionnaire and the sample size thus represents 5.85% of the population. In the survey, three key demographic variables were used: 1) academic title of the teaching staff; 2) their field of work (ISCED classification¹⁰); and 3) the institution where they primarily work.

Results

In this section, we assessed the situation of pedagogical training (education) of university teaching staff in Slovenia by comparing the calculated uni- and bi-variate statistics among university teaching staff. The results were calculated using ANOVA analysis which compared the means of the groups listed above, and a Chi-square test to compare descriptive statistics in cross tabs tables.

The questionnaire collected data on how the respondents' perceived the importance of pedagogical work on the three types of study programmes¹¹ in comparison to the other activities of university teachers. The lower the mean, the more important the pedagogical work as perceived by the respondents.

The results in Table 1 show that the pedagogical work of university teaching staff is considered to be more important at the lower academic levels, while it holds less importance at higher academic levels. In the *professional HE study programmes*, the teachers attributed a great deal of importance to pedagogical work (arithmetic mean 1.76), while resolving scholarly, development/research and professional problems came in third place (2.77). In the *university study programmes* scholarly,

Table 1. The level of study programmes and their impact on the attitude to the importance of pedagogical work (N = 381)¹³

	Professional HE SP		University SP		Master's SP	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Teaching staff activity according to the level and type of study programme						
Pedagogical work of teaching staff	1.76	0.94	2.06	1.10	2.55	1.10
Resolving scholarly, development/research and professional problems of teaching staff	2.77	1.02	2.14	1.01	1.84	1.05
Practical or expert work of teaching staff in a professional environment	2.29	1.05	2.88	1.08	3.03	1.03
International cooperation of teaching staff	3.18	0.91	2.92	0.98	2.59	0.95

development/research and professional work comes first, but interestingly is at the same level as pedagogical work (there is no statistical difference between 2.06 and 2.14). At the *master's level*, international cooperation has the same level of importance as pedagogical work – once again pedagogical work is placed second in importance (no statistically significant difference between 2.59 and 2.55). In the opinion of the teachers dealing with scholarly, development/research and professional problems this is most important at the master's level, with the difference from other places being quite large (1.84 for first and 2.55 for second place).

It seems logical that by increasing of the level of a study programme, generally more importance is given to *resolving scholarly, development/research and professional problems* and less importance to *pedagogical work*. However, our survey shows that respondents attribute quite an important role to the pedagogical work of higher education teaching staff (in comparison to other activities) at both the undergraduate and master's level.

Based on the above-mentioned data and in the context of pedagogical work, we would like to determine if participation in pedagogical courses differs from HEI to HEI and from group to group within the ISCED classification. In the case of *HE pedagogical training*, participation was also measured by the number of pedagogical hours spent.

The results in Table 2 reveal great differences between the general participation of the ISCED groups in pedagogical courses. On one hand, 47.0% of university teaching staff do not even have minimal theoretical pedagogical knowledge; whereas teaching staff from the *Natural Sciences* and *Engineering, manufacturing and construction groups* stand out with particularly little experience in pedagogical courses (64.6% and 77.7% of them had never participated in any kind of these courses). At the same time, only 21.2% and 20.2% of those staff had attended *HE pedagogical training* – it is interesting that this is contrary to the findings of Marentič Požarnik (2009), who indicated that in 2008 and 2009 the majority of teaching staff were “from science and technology departments, some also from

Table 2. Different kinds of participation in pedagogical courses¹⁴ according to ISCED groups and institution

	No kind of participation	'Adult education' after finishing a degree ¹⁵	Finished pedagogical study programme ¹⁶	Participation in HE pedagogical training ¹⁷	
Participation in pedagogical courses by field and institution	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Mean
Total	47.0%	10.3%	22.6%	31.4%	37.4
Education	10.9%	16.4%	67.3%	21.8%	53.8
Humanities and Arts	41.3%	10.0%	42.5%	26.3%	42.1
Social Sciences	37.3%	16.4%	19.4%	40.3%	42.1
Natural Sciences	64.6%	7.1%	11.1%	21.2%	40.7
Engineering, manufacturing, construction	77.7%	3.2%	1.1%	20.2%	28.1
Health and Welfare	29.4%	7.8%	13.7%	66.7%	24.6
Significance of mean differences (fields)	<0.001*	0.015*	<0.001*	<0.001*	0.216
UL	50.0%	4.0%	22.3%	32.0%	32.2
UM	53.3%	10.3%	23.4%	22.4%	61.2
UPR	23.8%	28.6%	28.6%	31.0%	50.7
UNG	75.0%	6.3%	18.8%	6.3%	100***
Private HEIs	32.9%	25.7%	20.0%	48.6%	27.5
Significance of mean differences (institutions)	<0.001*	<0.001*	0.859	0.001*	0.008**

*the differences are statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

**the ANOVA model is statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

***N = 1 (only one respondent from the HEIs answered the question).

economy and health area”, but these data are in accordance with the course “Foundations of teaching in higher education” (1999). The group from the field of *Education* reasonably stands out with the lowest percentage of teaching staff not having been involved in any kind of pedagogical courses, which is a consequence of the finished pedagogical study programme with the highest percentage of teaching staff (67.3%). Yet it has to be emphasized that ‘adult education’ and pedagogical study programmes do not provide adequate competencies and skills for teaching in HE. It therefore has to be pointed out that the *Education* group only has 21.8% of teaching staff who had participated in *HE pedagogical training*, but the amount of independent study time needed to complete the assignments of the training is the highest (53.8 hours). The average percentage of teaching staff involved in *HE pedagogical training* varies among the ISCED groups; it is very high when compared to the theoretical part (see Marentič Požarnik 2009), but nevertheless

low (31.4%) and the shares for the groups range from 20.2% (*Engineering, manufacturing and construction* group) to 66.7% (*Health and welfare* group), but the latter two have the smallest mean for the number of hours (28.1 and 24.6). It has to be pointed out that in the case of the *Health and welfare* group there are mainly informal courses of short duration offered internally at private HEIs. Although there appear to be statistically significant differences among the ISCED groups in all types of pedagogical courses (sig. <0.05), the ANOVA results show there are no statistically significant differences in participation in *HE pedagogical training* (measured in hours) among the ISCED groups.

In the case of HEIs, in general there are statistically significant differences in (non-) participation in different pedagogical courses and in *HE pedagogical training*, in both the percentage of university teachers involved and the average number of hours (sig. <0.05 in all cases). The UPR stands out as the institution with the smallest share of teaching staff not having been involved in any kind of courses (23.8%) but, on the other hand, a high percentage of teachers had obtained 'adult education' after graduation (28.6%) or completed their pedagogical study programme (28.6%). Participation in *HE pedagogical training* is not that high at the UPR (31.0%), but the mean for the *number of hours of training* is quite high (50.7). This high participation could be a consequence of the relatively well-defined requirements for pedagogical qualification stated in the institutional acts. Yet at the same time it can be determined from the institutional criteria that 'adult education' and pedagogical study programmes are considered relevant for teaching in HE. *Private HEIs* stand out as the second to last with 32.9% of teaching staff not having been involved in any kind of pedagogical courses; they are also the most involved in *HE pedagogical training* programmes (48.6%), but with the lowest *mean of hours* (27.5). The majority of the respondents were from private HEIs in the field of health, where especially informal courses of short duration and without accreditation are carried out. The UNG features as the institution with by far the lowest participation – 75.0% of teachers had never been involved in pedagogical courses and only 6.3% in *HE pedagogical training*. Again, the well-defined institutional criteria could be a reason since in the UNG's case no requirements pertain to pedagogical training and certification of an individual. In both of the two largest and oldest Slovenian universities (UL and the UM), 50.0% or more than 53.0% of the teaching staff had not had any kind of participation in pedagogical courses, but the UM stands out with the largest number of hours of *HE pedagogical training*.

Table 3 shows, as expected, that the majority of teaching staff attended *HE pedagogical training* at the Faculty of Arts at the UL (34.0%), which is logical since the Centre for Educational Development at the Faculty of Arts has the longest tradition of organising and running formal courses and training in Slovenia, especially in the field of HE didactics. The latter is followed by private HEIs

(20.8%; of these more than 48% are in the health field), and then by the various institutions of the UL. Only 4.4% of teaching staff had attended *HE pedagogical training* at the institutions of the UPR, while this university has the smallest proportion of staff without any pedagogical education (Table 2: 23.8%). None of the respondents mentioned the youngest Slovenian university – the UNG. Besides, Table 2 shows that 75.0% of teaching staff at the UNG had no pedagogical education of any kind and only 6.3% had participated in *HE pedagogical training*. Some teaching staff had attended pedagogical training at more than one HEI; consequently, the final sum exceeds 100% (122.5%).

Table 3. Teaching staff's involvement in *HE pedagogical training* according to the HEI

Institution of HE pedagogical training	Percentage of teaching staff
Faculty of Arts, UL	34.0%
HE institutions of UL	27.6%
HE institutions of UM	8.8%
HE institutions of UPR	4.4%
Private Slovenian HEIs	20.8%
Foreign HEIs	11.3%
Other institutions	15.6%
Sum	122.5%

We investigated how many university teachers had given a 'probationary lecture'. This was followed by making comparisons between the teaching staff of Slovenian HEIs and of their various academic titles in terms of demonstrating their educational skills.

Table 4. Comparison of a demonstration of pedagogical qualification by means of the 'probationary lecture' and according to the HEI

	'Probationary lecture'			
	Yes		No	
HEI	Percentage	N	Percentage	N
UL	100.0%	218	0.0%	0
UM	92.3%	72	7.7%	6
UPR	100.0%	30	0.0%	0
UNG	93.3%	14	6.7%	1
Private HEIs	98.4%	63	1.6%	1
Total	98.0%	397	2.0%	8

First, a comparison was made between the teaching staff of the various Slovenian HEIs. Only teachers who were required to give a 'probationary lecture' before being appointed to a position were included in the analysis (N = 405) – assistants and instructors were excluded.¹² The analysis showed that a total of 2.0% of the teaching

staff had not given a 'probationary lecture'. The UM had the highest percentage (7.7%), while all university teachers at the UL and the UPR had been required to give such a lecture. At the UNG, one respondent had not given a probationary lecture (N = 14).

Table 5. Comparison of a demonstration of pedagogical qualification by means of the 'probationary lecture' and according to academic title

	Given a 'probationary lecture'?			
	Yes		No	
Academic title	Percentage	N	Percentage	N
Full Professor	98.6%	73	1.4%	1
Associate Professor	98.8%	84	1.2%	1
Assistant Professor	99.4%	153	0.6%	1
Senior Lecturer	97.7%	43	2.3%	1
Lecturer	97.2%	35	2.8%	1
Lector (language teacher)	75.0%	9	25.0%	3
Assistant	9.4%	10	90.6%	96
Instructor	0.0%	0	100.0%	2
Total	79.3%	407	20.7%	106

Second, a comparison of teaching staff with different academic titles was made. This time, all respondents were included in the analysis (N = 513), which revealed that there was at least one teacher from each academic title who had not given a probationary lecture. *Lectors (language teachers)* stand out from all those required to give a probationary lecture with 25% (N = 9). On the other hand, there were 9.4% of *Assistants* who had already given a lecture, which could be a result of being reappointed to the same position.

Further, we checked the inter-relation between: i) teachers who had not participated in any type of courses; and ii) those who had not given a probationary lecture, even though it is obligatory under the law (excluding assistants and instructors). The results in Table 4 and Table 5 show that eight teachers had not given a probationary lecture. Out of the latter, four had not taken any kind of pedagogical course. The remaining four had participated in higher education pedagogical training, two had finished a pedagogical programme, and one had gone through the 'adult education' programme. Although a probationary lecture had been given by a large share of respondents, it should be noted that these lectures are typically done in front of a specially appointed commission, usually last one to two hours and are often unprofessional, unsystematic and performed more as an obligation.

According to the previously mentioned analyses, the satisfaction of higher education teaching staff with the assessment of pedagogical qualifications was measured using a 5-point scale that ranges from 1 *-I completely disagree* to 5 *-I completely agree*. Therefore, higher values indicate a higher level of satisfaction (Table 6).

Table 6. Satisfaction of higher education teaching staff with the assessment of the pedagogical qualification according to the institution

	Satisfaction with assessment of pedagogical qualification	
	Mean	SD
HEI		
UL	2.82	1.01
UM	2.85	1.03
UPR	2.90	1.12
UNG	3.31	1.01
Private HEIs	3.36	1.20
Total	2.92	1.07
Significance of mean differences	0.002*	

*the ANOVA model is statistically significant at the 0.01 level Dpt

The difference in the teaching staff's satisfaction with the assessment of pedagogical qualifications is statistically significant between the institutions (sig. <0.05), but not between the academic titles (sig. 0.080) and most certainly not between the fields of education (sig. 0.691). However, it is noteworthy that in the case of *Lectors (language teachers)* and *Instructors*, the groups were very small ($N = 2$ and $N = 12$) and consequently the results were difficult to compare. ANOVA showed that the teaching staff working for private HEIs (mean 3.36) and for the smallest and the youngest UNG (mean 3.31) are more satisfied with the assessment of pedagogical qualification than the teaching staff from other universities in Slovenia. Those differences are statistically significant, but still not that great. Besides, there is no apparent connection between satisfaction with the assessment of the pedagogical qualification and (non-) participation in pedagogical courses or, more specifically, between satisfaction with the assessment of the pedagogical qualification and participation in *HE pedagogical training* or giving a probationary lecture. There is a general mediocre level of satisfaction with the assessment of pedagogical qualification (always around 3 on a 5-point scale), pretty much the same in all fields of education and for all academic titles.

Conclusion

In Slovenia, as well as in most European countries, university teachers do not need to participate in *HE pedagogical training* nor do they need to submit a certificate of pedagogical qualification to obtain a teaching position. The quality of teaching in HE has become a much discussed topic in the last few years. The findings of this study are not very encouraging, but noticeable shifts have been made in the field of training and qualification among Slovenian HEIs in the last few years.

The results show that the respondents consider the pedagogical work of university teaching staff to be of great importance at both the undergraduate and master's level. In the *professional HE study programme*, the greatest importance is given to pedagogical work; in the *university study programme*, research and pedagogical

work of teaching staff are in first place; and at the *master's level* research work comes first followed by pedagogical work and international cooperation. This information could show that the respondents are well aware of the importance of pedagogical work in HE. However, it should be noted that the questionnaire could not ascertain the extent to which the respondents took account of the following concepts when answering the survey questions: HE pedagogical training, 'probationary lecture' and actual pedagogical qualification in the context of teaching in HE. Namely, there are many other indicators of pedagogical qualification in the Slovenian Minimum Standards and universities' criteria in the category of pedagogical work, i.e. mentoring, co-mentoring, preparation of textbooks and similar materials etc.

Further, the results show that almost half of the teachers (47.0%) had not participated in any kind of pedagogical course. In addition, only a third (31.4%) of the staff had finished *HE pedagogical training* in the last 10 years. The latter includes formally accredited and informal courses of different duration. Nevertheless, these results are quite encouraging because, according to Marentič Požarnik (2009), approximately 5% of eligible staff had attended some formal kind of training, but this figure relates to the Centre for Educational Development at the Faculty of Arts at the UL, where *HE pedagogical training*, especially in the field of *HE didactics*, continues to be held. Consequently, it was calculated that among the respondents involved in this survey, 10.5% had attended training at the Centre for Educational Development in the last 10 years. In addition to various types of training programmes, such a large deviation may be a consequence of teachers' participation in the newly accredited study programme (2012), which started in 2013. This study reveals some important findings: (formal) *HE pedagogical training* is carried out not only within the UL and its Faculty of Arts' Centre for Education, but there are also several different (internal) training programmes and courses of short duration without formal accreditation being offered within various (private) HEIs in Slovenia. The latter is especially evident in the Health and welfare group. Although these kinds of different training programmes are not officially accredited and are mainly of short implementation and duration, the latter indicates the important awareness of management and employees in terms of the quality of pedagogical work and pedagogical qualification of university teaching staff.

Statistically significant differences in participation in different types of pedagogical courses and in *HE pedagogical training* are therefore not only evident at the level of different ISCED groups, but (consequently) also at the level of various HEIs. The survey showed that the university with well-defined requirements and conditions regarding pedagogical courses, pedagogical qualification and the submission of certificates (UPR) had the lowest percentage of teachers without even basic theoretical pedagogical education; or the university with the least defined requirements in the field of pedagogical work (UNG) has the biggest share of teaching staff without even minimal pedagogical education. However, this connection is not valid for

participation in *HE pedagogical training*, which probably means that ‘adult education’ and *pedagogical study programmes* are considered appropriate for teaching at HE (although ‘adult education’ and pedagogical study programmes offer specific pedagogical knowledge). At private HEIs, the percentage of teaching staff without any participation is very low; however, the criteria at these HEIs were not analysed since there are 30 private HEIs in Slovenia (Ministry of Higher Education ... 2012). Therefore, no conclusions can be made. However, at the UPR only 4.4% of the teaching staff had attended *HE pedagogical training* and the majority had participated in training at the UL or, more specifically, at its Faculty of Arts. None of the respondents stated the UNG, which is a private university, as a HEI that had implemented *HE pedagogical training*. It has to be mentioned that the UPR (2003) and the UNG (2006) are the youngest Slovenian universities and several teachers there were previously employed at the larger and older Slovenian universities or at previously private HEIs.

The universities’ internal criteria (with the UNG as the only exception) and the national Minimum Standards for appointment to positions require a ‘probationary lecture’ as the only obligatory demonstration of pedagogical qualification. Considering that a probationary lecture is certainly not adequate for assessing pedagogical skills, it is of concern that 2% (8) of the respondents had not carried out a probationary lecture and, of the latter, four had not attended any pedagogical course; however, they all perform the teaching process. Based on the results, it is interesting to note that in general the respondents are satisfied with the assessment of pedagogical qualification in the primary HEI that employs them. The highest level of satisfaction is at private HEIs, which also have the highest participation in *HE pedagogical training* but, on the other hand, the private HEIs are followed by the respondents from the UNG, which had the lowest participation in these training programmes.

The survey reveals facts, the general condition and the opinions of university teaching staff about pedagogical training and qualification (in the broadest sense of the word) in Slovenia to an unprecedented extent. Although there has been substantial progress in this field in the last few years, this survey still reminds all key stakeholders that (even short) *HE pedagogical training* is not carried out frequently and in the institutional procedures it is often replaced with any type of pedagogical education, training or programme (i.e. ‘adult education’ and pedagogical study programmes) or by a ‘probationary lecture’ which is too often unprofessional, uncohesive and offered more out of obligation. This is clearly unacceptable.

It is certainly a positive fact that in the last few years a variety of *HE pedagogical training programmes* have been offered more regularly in Slovenian HEIs. But it is important to achieve an adequate effect of those trainings on higher education teaching and teachers’ pedagogical work in general, with both initial and further training being important. Consequently, trainers’ qualification (educational

developers) and the competencies and objectives of these programmes have to be considered. However, the overall impact of *HE pedagogical training* and consequently the progress of teaching staff will probably not be achieved until the requirements and conditions of pedagogical qualification, such as training programmes and certification, and conditions for trainers are better defined in the national legislation and criteria of HEIs. Further, the successful implementation of the legislation, institutional criteria and thus training programmes is also the subject of the appropriate evaluation and assessment of pedagogical qualification (i.e. portfolio assessment). This is not only the responsibility of the HEIs, but also of the competent national authorities/institutions, i.e. national quality assurance agencies.

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Notes

- 1 In the Slovenian Higher Education Act (OG RS 2012), the expression "higher education teachers" is used. It includes: full professor, associate professor, assistant professor and lector (language teacher); for professional higher education programmes, also: senior lecturer and lecturer. The target population of the survey was also *faculty assistants* who carry out the teaching process, namely assistants and instructors. In the paper, the following expressions are used for 'higher education teachers': university teaching staff, university teachers or teaching staff and teachers only.
- 2 High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education: Report to the European Commission on Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning in Europe's Higher Education Institutions, Brussels, 18 June, 2013.
- 3 A large extent of the paper is based on the Slovenian legislation (as the basis for the research questions), where the term *pedagogical work* is used. Consequently, this expression is frequently used in the empirical part of our survey.
- 4 This survey is focused on first- and second-level educational study programmes. According to the Slovenian Higher Education Act (OG RS 2012), the classification is as follows: first level (professional HE study programmes, university study programmes), second level (master's study programmes, long non-structured master's study programmes).
- 5 UL 2012, UM 2012, UNG 2013a, UPR 2014a, UPR 2014b, UPR 2014c.
- 6 And the UNG's criteria do not include numerical scoring of the teaching and research work of university teachers.
- 7 At the UL textbooks are given up to 24 points, at the UPR up to 26.5 points are given for educational works, and at the UM study material is assessed up to 32 points.
- 8 Slovenian: *Osnove visokošolske didaktike*.
- 9 The paper was completed at the beginning of July 2014.
- 10 The International Standard Classification of Education – ISCED 1997 (UNESCO 2012) has 25 fields of education organised within nine broad groups. In the survey, nine groups were merged into six, as follows: 1) Education (14 Teacher training and education science), 2) Humanities and Arts (21 Arts, 22 Humanities), 3) Social sciences (31 Social and behavioural science, 32 Journalism and information, 34 Business and administration, 38 Law, 81 Personal services, 84 Transport services, 86 Security services), 4) Natural Sciences (42 Life sciences, 44 Physical sciences, 46 Mathematics and statistics, 48 Computing, 6 Agriculture, 62 Agriculture, forestry and fishery, 64 Veterinary, 85 Environmental protection), 5) Engineering, manufacturing and construction (52 Engineering and engineering trades, 54 Manufacturing and processing, 58 Architecture and building) and 6) Health and welfare (72 Health, 76 Social services).
- 11 Levels of study programmes: professional HE study programme (professional HE SP), university study programme (university SP) and master's study programme (master's SP).
- 12 Assistants on their first appointment and instructors do not need to demonstrate a pedagogical qualification (OG RS 2010).
- 13 The number of respondents who answered all the questions in accordance with the instructions (no missing values) was 381. Therefore, this was the sample size used for the statistical analysis for comparisons between the means of several variables.
- 14 In the empirical part of the paper, the expression »pedagogical courses« is used when talking about: i) 'adult education' after finishing a degree, ii) a completed pedagogical study programme, and iii) participation in *HE pedagogical training*.
- 15 'Adult education' is dedicated to graduates of non-pedagogical HE study programmes who by law are required to have a pedagogical education and knowledge for teaching at the primary and secondary level or at higher vocational colleges in Slovenia.
- 16 In pedagogical study programmes in Slovenia, teachers for the *primary* and *secondary* level of education are educated.
- 17 *HE pedagogical training* includes: HE didactic, rhetoric, team working, e-learning etc. dedicated to university teachers.

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