



THE IMPACT OF UNIVERSITY PEDAGOGY

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Abstract:

University Pedagogy focuses on improving teaching skills and learning outcomes. As an interdisciplinary discipline, it draws on evidence from psychology, education, and social sciences to provide empirical evidence for effective teaching practices. In recent decades, there have been various discussions about innovative teaching methods and the importance of critical reflection for academics. All of these issues pose challenges for researchers, as technological and economic developments directly affect the role of universities and all involved members of the academic community. This research focuses on the impact of university pedagogy through data that highlight, on the one hand, its significant contribution and, on the other, the challenges it is called upon to address directly. University institutions are experiencing a new normal, where professors and students are deemed necessary to cope with the complex nature of modern university teaching with consistency and efficiency.

Keywords: university, pedagogy, professors, student, Greece

1. Introduction

Uncontrolled globalization and the economic crisis have not left university pedagogy unaffected. The information society, together with the use of new technologies, has overturned the framework of learning and teaching, as well as the ideology of Lifelong Learning and the policy towards building the Single European Educational Area (Grek and Russell, 2024). Teaching and research are two important pillars of higher education professors. Until the end of the 19th century, teaching was the most important function of universities, but during the 20th and especially the 21st century, research has become the primary concern of academics (Li and Xue, 2023). This has resulted in some universities relegating teaching to a secondary role for faculty. Academics' teaching effectiveness lies in the context of teaching versus research and is reflected in their progress throughout their academic careers (Kaltsidis *et al.*, 2021).

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In many cases, what really matters is not the improvement of their teaching skills but their research. This results in their pedagogical role being downgraded, yet they remain extremely active in terms of publishing in scientific journals or submitting research projects (Felder, 2004). In recent decades, it is apparent that the importance of teaching is being reexamined and reevaluated in Greece, ushering in a pedagogical culture in academia (Kottara *et al.*, 2024).

University pedagogy is an interdisciplinary field that combines theories and practices from pedagogy, psychology, sociology and other sciences, with the aim of improving teaching and learning in higher education. It is based on learning theories, providing a framework for understanding how students learn and designing effective teaching strategies, applying pedagogical principles and focusing on the needs of adult learners (Gougoulakis *et al.*, 2020).

Practical applications of university pedagogy include course design, the selection of teaching methods, and the development of educational materials.

In addition, it encourages active learning through group work, case studies, discussions and problem-solving. At the same time, it promotes a variety of assessment methods, such as written exams, assignments, presentations and peer assessment, utilizing new technologies for interactive learning environments. Equally important, it provides training programs for the development of the teaching skills of university teachers (Kottara *et al.*, 2025a).

Its main objectives are to improve the quality of teaching, enhance student learning, create an inclusive learning environment and develop critical thinking. University pedagogy is important for preparing students for the 21st century, developing university teachers, and responding to contemporary challenges (Kaltsidis *et al.*, 2021). However, the implementation of university pedagogy faces challenges, such as resistance to change, lack of resources, and the need for continuous professional development. It is noteworthy that the digital age requires universities to integrate new technologies, develop personalized learning experiences, and enhance interdisciplinary learning.

University pedagogy, as a dynamic and evolving field, plays a critical role in shaping the future of higher education. It is within this context that this scientific work was developed in order to identify the impact of university pedagogy, helping the academic community to assess the current situation with all that this entails.

2. University teaching and learning

University Pedagogy is approached through the complex and intricate phenomenon of learning in higher education, taking into account the need to engage in reflection and critical thinking. The reflection on teaching, although poorly understood as Kreber (2005) argues, lies in three types of reflection: on content, process and conditions.

Academics need to focus on three axes of knowledge regarding their teaching: teaching, pedagogy and curriculum, which can be explored through the proposed model of Mezirow's transformative learning theory.

Mezirow's theory (2009) highlights not only the traditional character of organic learning (which mainly refers to the acquisition of knowledge) but also transformative learning, i.e. the process of critical approach, synthesis and application of acquired knowledge, so that learners develop critical thinking and skills for evaluating the methods, knowledge and attitudes they acquire through their studies.

Learning in higher education lies in three dimensions: the content (including areas such as curriculum, teaching methodologies, development of basic skills and especially critical thinking), motivation (i.e. the emotional part of teaching, which stems from the relationships between teachers and students) and the interaction between the university and the local community, as part of the broader socio-economic environment (Illeris, 2007).

When a professor uses modern learning theories as a teaching framework, he aims to lead students to learn how to approach critical thinking, how to collaborate and share work, present and defend their opinions, and self-assess and evaluate peers (Kottara *et al.*, 2025b).

Transformative and holistic learning can lead to more effective teaching in universities, given that the content dimension in the context of higher education is related to critical thinking and the use of experiential teaching methodologies (Kokkos, 2016).

Research on teaching and learning in higher education focuses on the importance of the dual relationship between teachers and students through the emotions involved in learning (Kamtsios and Karagiannopoulou, 2016; Kordts-Freudinger, 2017).

The cognitive regulation of teachers' emotions confirms that approaches to teaching are based on emotional variables and that teaching could be understood as an emotional experience. In the same context, there is growing research interest in investigating the relationship between teachers' emotions and the teaching approach they adopt (Trigwell, 2012).

It has been deemed necessary for teachers to use various methods and techniques in order to stimulate student interaction, critical thinking, and active learning.

It is also important to achieve the "small class feeling" in large classes, following the model developed for active teaching in higher education.

Active learning consists of "*substantive learning activities that require higher-order thinking and skill development over the simple transfer of information*" in order to lead to a fruitful assessment defined as "*information communicated to a student and intended to modify their thinking or behavior for the purpose of improving learning*" (Lynch and Pappas, 2017).

The same researchers report that active learning, especially in large classes, is beneficial for both students and teachers in terms of their learning engagement and learning outcomes. Prosser and Trigwell (2014) argue that students are more likely to adopt superficial approaches to study if instructors adopt a less student-centered approach to teaching. The teacher-centered learning model leads to the transmission of information, while the shift towards a student-centered model focuses on challenging students to think deeply, critically, and creatively.

It is noteworthy that the integration of technology into modern educational approaches is essential if they are designed and implemented correctly. This is because

they support learning activities and overall academic outcomes, such as high participation, interpersonal interactions between participants, metacognitive skills, peer guidance, motivation, and engagement in an experiential way (Lazou and Tsinakos, 2023).

Although university pedagogy has existed since the 19th century, it still does not function satisfactorily. The majority of Greek academics have not been trained in Pedagogy and Didactics (Toka and Gioti, 2022).

In a broader context, university pedagogy is a multidimensional process that deals with specific teaching practices related to the design, implementation and evaluation of learning outcomes. It is reasonable to ask questions related to what kind of knowledge and skills a university professor should possess in order to effectively facilitate students' learning and personal development (Kottara *et al.*, 2025b).

Additionally, there is a view that the Greek educational system of university education incorporates various pedagogical theories and teaching approaches while dealing with educational practices for the design, implementation and evaluation of learning processes. Academics need to participate more actively in their teaching role in order to achieve better results in the field of teaching (Kaltsidis *et al.*, 2021).

At the same time, university pedagogy deals with issues arising from counseling and educational psychology and enables an academic to communicate and interact better with his students. In recent years, there has been a great need for pedagogical training for both permanent teaching staff in higher education in Greece and their collaborators (postdoctoral researchers, doctoral candidates, and scientific associates).

University professors need to add the pedagogical dimension to their professional profile, taking into account three parameters of their teaching role: application, interaction and teaching (Kivunja, 2015).

University pedagogy promotes the combination of assessment methods, such as written exams, assignments, presentations and peer assessment, leveraging new technologies for more interactive learning environments. It also provides training programs for the development of the teaching skills of university professors.

In terms of its practical application, it includes lesson planning, the selection of experiential teaching methods and the development of updated educational material. In a broader context, it encourages active learning through group work, case studies, discussions and problem-solving.

The development of university pedagogy principles helps professors develop courses that move away from the traditional teacher-centered approach, adopting a more student-centered philosophy that promotes active participation, critical thinking, and skill development of students (Zogla, 2018).

Its primary goals are to improve the quality of teaching, enhance student learning, and create an inclusive learning environment. University pedagogy is important for preparing students for the 21st century, developing university teachers, and responding to contemporary challenges (Toka and Gioti, 2022).

In Greece, a network of university pedagogies has developed, and they have sparked discussions on innovative teaching methods and the importance of critical self-reflection for academics (Kedra and Rotidi, 2017).

As an interdisciplinary discipline, university pedagogy draws on evidence from psychology, education, and social sciences to provide empirical evidence, with the aim of creating good practices with effective teaching practices. These efforts are essential to addressing the complex nature of university teaching and improving overall educational quality (Melo and Campos, 2019).

Table 1: Indicative research in the field under consideration

Abstract summary	Main findings	Outcome measured
Kedra, K., & Rotidi, G. (2017). University Pedagogy: A New Culture Is Emerging in Greek Higher Education.	University Pedagogy is an emerging field in Greek higher education that focuses on improving academics' teaching skills and practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Critical self-reflection on teaching can lead academics to adopt alternative teaching practices and improve their pedagogical knowledge. - There is an emerging culture in Greek higher education where academics are starting to discuss and debate innovative teaching and learning methods. - A symposium and empirical research marked the beginning of this new culture focused on teaching and learning excellence in Greek higher education.
Melo, G. F., & Campos, V. T. B. (2019). University Pedagogy: for an institutional teaching development policy in higher education.	Institutional projects on University Pedagogy are needed to contribute to the professional development of higher education teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The study found that various factors, including teachers' experiences, knowledge, and professional and personal backgrounds, contribute to their professional and identity development. - The concepts of teacher training, identity, and professional development are complex, multifaceted, and shaped by historical, social, cultural, and economic factors. - Continuous training actions developed in collaboration with teachers can contribute to their professional development and improve their pedagogical practices.
Zogla, I. (2018). Science of Pedagogy: Theory of Educational Discipline and Practice.	Pedagogy is a well-structured science with its own object of investigation, distinct from other education sciences, and its	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pedagogy is transitioning towards a more complex, learning-centered science to support competence-oriented education.

	theories and practices underpin formal and informal education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pedagogy is developing its own theories, practices, and disciplines within higher education, and its changing nature allows it to be sustainable and resilient to external forces. - The understanding of pedagogy involves a discussion of the constant and changing components of its definition, particularly in relation to teacher philosophy.
Toka, A., & Gioti, L. (2022). Evaluating university pedagogy: Teacher and student perspectives.	This paper evaluates university pedagogy from the perspectives of both teachers and students at a specific institution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A lot of the teaching features are aligned with student-centered and adult learning principles, and students are generally satisfied with the teaching and learning experience. - Despite the use of various teaching techniques, enriched presentation remains the most frequently used technique. - Students' perceptions of the teaching approach (teacher-centered vs. student-centered) are correlated with their academic background, with those from education backgrounds perceiving it as more teacher-centered.

3. Pedagogy in Greece

Eight Balkan countries have entered into a partnership with twelve university institutions, including those in Albania, Greece, and Serbia, with the ultimate goal of promoting university pedagogy.

Actions were developed for the establishment and upgrading of Centers of Teaching and Learning Support (CTLs), while at the same time, the Balkan Network of University Pedagogy (BALKANETUP) was created.

Towards the end of 2022, within the framework of Erasmus+, the implementation of the MAGNET Project – (Managerial and Governance Enhancement through Teaching) was launched, with co-financing from the EU and with the main objective of directing synergies and actions related to supporting the teaching work of academics in the Western Balkan countries (Toka and Gioti, 2022).

Additionally, the establishment of KEDIMA in university institutions was important, with the aim of organizing publicity, information, awareness-raising and promotion actions with indicative goals:

- strengthening communication and cooperation between members of the teaching staff of the university institution through the organization of meetings for the

exchange of good practices or problems that university staff face in the exercise of their teaching work,

- the development of initiatives and synergies with corresponding structures of other universities in the country, institutes or bodies with related activities operating in Greece or abroad and
- the exchange of know-how and the widest possible exposure to new, international trends in teaching and learning through collaboration between experts and distinguished members of academic staff of foreign universities with the aim of promoting mobility to and from foreign institutions.
- the implementation of training Learning Cycles and seminars for members of the teaching staff on a wide range of topics.

A milestone was the main action with the organization of the 1st International Conference of the Network of Teaching and Learning Centers in Greece in Alexandroupolis in July 2023, entitled: 1st International Conference of the Network of Teaching and Learning Centers in Greece, within the framework of the Horizontal Action of the Network of Teaching and Learning Centers in Greece.

It is apparent that, in Greece, an environment of search and reflection has been created regarding university teaching and learning (Papanikolaou *et al.*, 2023).

The creation of a coordinated framework for ensuring quality in teaching and learning is of key importance, as it contributes to the professional development of faculty members.

Additionally, through KEDIMA, educational activities are strengthened for both teachers and students. The modern role of university institutions is, among other things, also social for a more sustainable perspective.

4. Conclusions

In this research, the impact of university pedagogy was revealed through the examination and evaluation of research that approached the field under examination. The institutional role of universities plays a decisive role in the social, cultural and productive development of countries around the world, as they offer knowledge and skills in order to meet the multiplying educational needs of society. Academics are deemed necessary to transform from "executors" to "architects" of learning, having a facilitating role through the application of the principles of university pedagogy.

University professors are required to be guided by a variety of pedagogical tactics, including active learning techniques, inquiry-based learning, and practical application. These tactics promote critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork, preparing students to succeed in a complex and competitive environment.

Additionally, assessment is an important process of university education, which must be consistent with learning objectives and provide meaningful feedback to students, encouraging reflection and continuous personal and future professional development.

University pedagogy is a dynamic and expanding discipline that adapts to the changing demands of students and society. Important components of university

pedagogy are a dedication to lifelong learning, a love of teaching, and a desire to help students achieve optimal learning outcomes.

Its success often lies in creating an inclusive and engaging learning environment in which all students feel valued, respected and supported. This involves identifying and addressing the diverse needs and backgrounds of students, including cultural, linguistic and socio-economic disparities.

Furthermore, the creation of "good practices" and the integration of technology into teaching are components that increase student participation, providing motivation, flexibility and greater satisfaction.

The training of professors at university institutions through the holding of seminars, by structures such as KEDIMA, contributes to the familiarization and improvement of the use of digital tools for the creation of interactive learning experiences, the stimulation of online discussions and the provision of personalized feedback. Additionally, the synergies and strategies that promote university pedagogy normalize the ethical aspects of learning, creating a framework of a welcoming and stimulating learning environment, encouraging critical thinking, intellectual growth, and the cultivation of lasting bonds in the academic community.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

About the Author

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