



Bologna Seminar

Bologna 2020: Unlocking Europe's potential -

Contributing to a better world

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Changing Paradigms in Higher Education

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Working Group 5:

Changing paradigms in higher education:

- *“from information to conceptual age”*,
- *inter- and multidisciplinary organisation of curricula,*
- *liberal arts issueí*

1. Toward re-conceptualization of university

An era of *re-conceptualization of university*: universities are entering the knowledge-based society / the knowledge-based society is entering universities.

Levels of re-conceptualization of university / HE:

- *European and global level* (Bologna Process, Lisbon Strategy, UNESCO HE Forum etc.);
- *national level* (new policy development for HE and R);
- *institutional level* (mission; competition; regional and international agendas etc.);
- *micro-levels* of departments and disciplines (a pace / direction of development, etc.);
- last but not least, an *epistemological level* (paradigms and conceptual organisation of disciplines/research).

1.1 Criticisms of disciplinary fragmentation

Illustration 1: “Yet it is also clear that while the research university model evolving during the *latter half of the 20th century* has been remarkably successful, many of its most distinguishing characteristics have been mixed blessings. [...] Faculty have learned that the best way to attract funding in a *competitive, peer-review research culture* is to become *as specialised as possible*, since this narrows the group of those likely to review their proposals (perhaps even to their colleagues), thereby driving even more the *disciplinary fragmentation of the academy*. As a result, academic disciplines dominate the modern research university, developing curriculum, marshalling resources, administering programmes, and doling out rewards.”

(Duderstadt, J.J., 2004)

1.2 “*Life is not divided into disciplines*”

Illustration 2:

*“In many respects, the discipline-defined departmental structure has served academia well. But it has also failed, most notably in its **lacks of flexibility** and its inherent drive toward **ever-increasing specialisation**. Clearly, a move away from a structure based solely on **single-discipline** methodologically defined studies to one that is more flexible, inclusive, and that provides elbow room for interdisciplinary **broad-picture investigations**, is very much in order.”*

Schopf and Hirsch (2002)

1.3 Internationalization and innovation

Traditionally, *knowledge* and *research* didn't respect neither geographical nor disciplinary boundaries. They were supposed to be *universal*.

Knowledge and research are challenged to be *global commodities* (perhaps *monopolies* as well?) today ó a challenge which needs an academic response!

International/global university/research ó it is to address:

(1) *global problems and questions*

(2) *in new ways*.

Interdisciplinarity: not a new niche in the wild world of research competition ó but as *an opportunity* to respond to *global challenges* of today as well as to contribute to higher education and research as *global public goods*.

2. Inter/multi-disciplinarity vs. disciplines

Inter/multi-disciplinarity:

- (a) it hasn't been invented recently but has strong and *deep roots in the history of research*;
- (b) it has been a trendy word for decades but, in reality, *monodisciplinarity in research prevails*;
- (c) it *isn't a magic word* which may solve all problems.

The role which modern *disciplines* play vs. determining / defining *a university's internal divisions and structures*:

- faculties, schools, departments
- academic promotion, academic values
- their financing and roles in a society etc.

Academic re-positioning of today: individual disciplines take various positions. ó What future?

3. Humanities at risk?

Fears have been expressed ó in Europe and worldwide ó that *the Bologna Process endangers certain disciplines and study areas, in particular humanities:*

Illustration 3:

õ*Germans go to Pittsburgh to study Hegel. Could you imagine it twenty years ago? America will become a country of theory. I fear that the Bologna reform has been the biggest catastrophe since ever.*ö

Slavoj Zizek in an interview to *Dnevnik* (Ljubljana); 5 April 2008

3.1 Humanities at risk?

Illustration 4:

Another potential threat to the maintenance of Korean studies in Europe is the 'Bologna Process', whereby European Union members agreed to set up a common education curriculum and higher education system by 2010. The process includes the integration and abolition of certain academic studies that are regarded as 'scholastically unpopular.'

Choi Jie-ho, 2005 ; in: Zgaga, Looking out ó the Bologna Process in a Global Setting, Oslo 2006, p. 68*

4. Studying and scholarship – for what sake?

Knowledge and commercialisation: fundamental research (at least in some disciplines) in risk? - What are *means* and what are *ends*?

Knowledge and wisdom: a forgotten relationship today?

Knowledge for *the sake of economic growth* **vs.** *knowledge for its own sake*: the historical, cultural, societal role of disinterested, independent knowledge, based on unbiased research.

Dichotomy *searching for growth* vs. *searching for truth* should be addressed from today's point of view.

Where to, university?, *What higher education and research in Europe beyond 2010?* are crucial questions.

Ethical dimensions of knowledge (research, teaching and learning, etc) should be reconsidered.