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Кочкин Ярослав
Алексеевич

Научный руководитель
доктор наук в научной области
общественных наук научного направления
педагогических наук, профессор



Турк Марко

Рецензент
Кандидат филологических наук, проректор
по учебной работе ДГТУ



Колодкин Владимир
Александрович

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SAS Director (Ph.D., Candidate of
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Kockin Yaroslav
Alekseevich

Supervisor
Professor of higher
education pedagogy



Turk Marko

Reviewer
Candidate of
Philological Sciences,
Vice-rector for
academic affairs,
DSTU



Kolodkin Vladimir
Aleksandrovich

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TABLE OF CONTENT

INTRODUCTION	3
CHAPTER 1. LEGACY OF DON STATE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY.....	3
1.1.T-UNIVERSITY AS A STARTING POINT OF CHANGES.....	5
1.2.COMPETENCIES	6
1.3.WHY ARE COMPETENCIES IMPORTANT FOR T-UNIVERSITY?....	7
1.4. PARTNERSHIP WITH STUDENTS	8
1.5. VALUES.....	9
1.6. THE SCHOOL X AND T-UNIVERSITY	10
1.7. RESEARCH OBJECT AND QUESTION	10
CHAPTER 2. WHAT WAS DONE BEFORE THE BACKFIRE	11
2.1. EVALUATION OF COMPETENCIES	11
2.2. VALUES.....	12
2.3. FEEDBACK	13
CHAPTER 3. LITERATURE REVIEW	15
3.1. VALUES.....	16
3.2. COMPETENCIES	18
3.3. STUDENT PARTNERSHIP	19
3.4. FEEDBACK	22
CHAPTER 4. METHODS	24
4.1. PARTICIPANTS	24
4.2. METHODOLOGY	24
4.2.1. QUANTATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESERACH.....	24
4.2.2. FOCUS GROUPS.....	26
4.3. RICE METHOD	27
4.4. DEVIATION OF INFORMATION	30
4.5. PROCEDURE.....	31
4.6. DATA ANALYSIS.....	35

4.7. REPORT	36
4.8. FOCUS GROUP GUIDE	38
CHAPTER 5. IMPLEMENTATION	43
5.1. FIRST ATTEMPT WITH SCHOOL X.....	43
5.2. SCHOOL X RESULTS	45
5.3. SECOND ATTEMPT WITH T-UNIVERSITY.....	46
5.4. T-UNIVERSITY RESULTS	48
5.5. INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS	49
5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	50
5.7. HOW TO WORK WITH LOW AWARENESS STUDENTS?.....	52
CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION.....	55
CONCLUSION.....	57
LIST OF REFERENCES	59
LIST OF FIGURES	64
APPENDIX 1. DMTI TEST.....	65
APPENDIX 2. SCHWARTZ METHOD.....	69

INTRODUCTION

The feedback is one of the most important aspects of teaching and learning. Moreover, it is a useful tool to support teaching and learning processes through maintenance [Nathenson., & Henderson,p. 13]. New educational goals create new formats, tasks, visions, results and environment. Maintaining all the previous points is a difficult task to manage. However, to start working on that it is needed to understand what must be changed. It is where the feedback plays a significant role. Most of the information can be gathered with one tool. However, despite the fact that feedback as an instrument does not require much attention but demands a dreadful amount of preparation and execution [Lehman, Perry & Turski,p. 410]. The Russian education system is an interesting example. It is no secret that Russian students do not have a strong sense of subjectivity [Kisel, Dubskih, Butiv, p. 100; Yagupov, p. 9]. For the most part, school is not the place of personal development but the standardisation of mind discipline. There is a common opinion that the first year of Higher Education should be spent on redesigning or even developing student thinking abilities. The question that arises is the following: how to get useful feedback from the group of students that do not understand the value of it to enhance teaching and learning experience? This thesis discovers the preconditions of this question established what the role of institutional values, competencies and student partnership in the feedback system and how it was collected, analysed and implemented.

CHAPTER 1. LEGACY OF DON STATE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

The Don State Technical University (DSTU) is one of the flagship Russian universities. To understand the context that is around it we should get deeply into the history of DSTU and its present state.

DSTU was established on May 20, 1930 [Don State Technical University, 2022]. The original name was North Caucasus Agricultural Institute of

Engineering. There were two faculties: agricultural engineering and metalworks. The establishment is very important because it is the legacy and the culture that DSTU carries to this very day - the technical and industrial-based vision. «Today DSTU is the largest scientific and educational center in the South of Russia, successfully combining the fundamental traditions of Russian academic education with advanced technologies and teaching methods. DSTU is a university with long-standing traditions. We are proud of our history and achievements. At the same time, DSTU is the university that actively participates in the higher education reforms carried out by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation. By raising first-class experts, conducting research in partnerships with leading national and foreign higher education and scientific institutions, supporting technological innovation and entrepreneurship, we are building a future to be proud of! DSTU supports young innovators and scientists, develops scientific and research infrastructure, actively participates in foreign study programs and widens cooperation with the world scientific community. It intends not only to maintain the leading position among the regional universities, but to reach a qualitatively new level, becoming the center for talented youth and the driver of the Don region economy growth» [Don State Technical University, 2022]. It is the drawback that university has. The effect of it, unfortunately, is easily visible. It could be summed up as “intellectual” and science dominance of technological faculties. Humanities do not have strong subjectivity. They act as support units of technological faculties. For example, the linguistic department is focused on translation of industrial papers or communication channels with the foreign partners. Next example is the medicine department. It is focused on medical tool engineering. These examples show that there is no diversity of opinions or visions. The university is still deeply attached to the technical background.

The legacy and vision, as it frequently works, do not correspond with reality. The DSTU positions itself as the modern university that is ready to work

on global problems posed by UNESCO, create a new type of person who is ready to contribute to the solutions of the global problems and adapt to the fast changing world. Nonetheless, the legacy can be a binding issue that stops from evolving as a system. DSTU is a big university that is too heavy to move forward hand by hand with the time. Supposedly, it is the reality that big universities face. Russian Higher Education was preparing for the changes for a long time but the process is slow. The resistance from the faculty, students and administrative bodies is the best example of why it is an ungrateful mission to reform the university (Volyanskaya, pp. 25-35). Especially the one that has a huge legacy with a great number of self-grown professors that do not see changes as a possible way of enhancing the quality of teaching.

1.1.T-UNIVERSITY AS A STARTING POINT OF CHANGES

To develop a personal way of transformation, the idea of T-university was introduced at DSTU. This type of institutional model pointed to increasing the overall quality of education given.

T-university is a concept that is based on the vision of SKOLKOVO education center of modern university. “T” means transformational. The constant analysis, development and execution of changes are a key for the better performance of university. At the core of the model is the liberal arts model. Mission of liberal arts education is to educate a liberal person capable of self life-long learning and has personal and social responsibility [Rossman, pp. 6-7]. Pedagogy gives a great understanding of surrounding contexts, community gives different perspectives, skills and opportunities, curriculum provides a great depth into liberal arts and sciences. It means better quality, character building, close interaction with the faculty, diversity and development of critical thinking.

This new educational space that the development team is trying to implement is based on the idea of 2+2 model. However, here they use the 1+1+2 model. In the first year students have core courses, in the second Field of Science

courses and third and fourth are major. Field of Science is a space where students can try a part of a major. For example, Field of social sciences consists of economics, sociology, psychology, and political science. More individual and group practical work than lectures are presented.

Internalisation is also an important concept that is taken into consideration. In many Russian HEIs internalisation means to have students from CIS or China [A Record Number of International Students Chose Russia in 2020, 2021]. New understanding of it demands to use foreign experience to increase the quality of education and diversity of opinions. The T-university uses the foreign experience in the Russian Higher Education realities. The benchmarks were the MIT and California Institute of Technology. In that sense, T-university is an international project. However, there are no more than that to the present time. Courses in English, English speaking professors and joint programs with foreign universities are in future plans. The idea of multiculturalism was not the idea but it can be a great addition to the internalisation of a new institution.

The final design of what is the T-university for the DSTU was not fully formed. The evaluation and constant examination of competences, institutional values, the understanding of educational modules and spaces and principle of partnership are still issues to solve. The work currently in progress as the project is in the implementation stage.

1.2.COMPETENCIES

T-university is trying to establish its own version of the individual student track (IST) that would develop the competencies. The developing team has no time before the start of September to prepare a full model of competencies. Nonetheless, T-university takes responsibility to develop them. This combination of competencies is a project of IST. There are:

1. Communication;
2. Critical thinking;

3. Self-organisation;
4. Goal-setting;
5. Self-reflection;
6. Creative thinking;
7. Systematic thinking;
8. Work with contexts.

However, the obstacle is that this set of competencies is the mix of modern trends and Shchedrovitskiy method and there is no information on how to evaluate both of them. It is two different ways of understanding a student's personality. The idea to develop competencies is relatively new for Russian Higher Education but not worldwide. For that reason, it was decided to establish the system to evaluate this set of competencies that would satisfy the needs of IST development team. The Shchedrovitskiy method plays an important role for T-university as it focuses on the actions that develop competencies needed. SKOLKOVO Project design sessions are based on this method. This method was chosen to be the base for the future competency model.

1.3.WHY ARE COMPETENCIES IMPORTANT FOR T-UNIVERSITY?

The initial idea of the development team was to create IST that would satisfy the needs of modern society and help students in their future life and professional development. For the DSTU, it is a possibility to increase the educational quality. In the field of Russian HE that will win several points for the university in university topics. Nonetheless, there are issues that are not solved. There is no center of competencies in DSTU. The literature review of DSTU documents has shown that there is the description of competencies but no methodology and technologies of development and evaluation. The idea of competencies to be the core of the educational results now sounds more like a metaphor. To this moment, it is a slide in the Learning-Management System (LMS) that works as the tool to evaluate or develop in the class. This is a problem

that T-university has but no person knows what can be done with it. It affects the project that was developed. The competencies and values are a combination that creates the basis for the partnership with students.

1.4. PARTNERSHIP WITH STUDENTS

T-university is a space of collaboration between students, professors and administration. Unfortunately, the results of the feedback proves that partnership is a long way to be taken. One of the reasons for that is the hard transmission from student-object to student-subject understanding of educational reality (Figure 1). It is connected with the legacy of the Soviet education system of education [Yagupov, pp. 1-2]. The main question that was stated here is the following: «How to collect the feedback from the students with low level of subjectivity?»

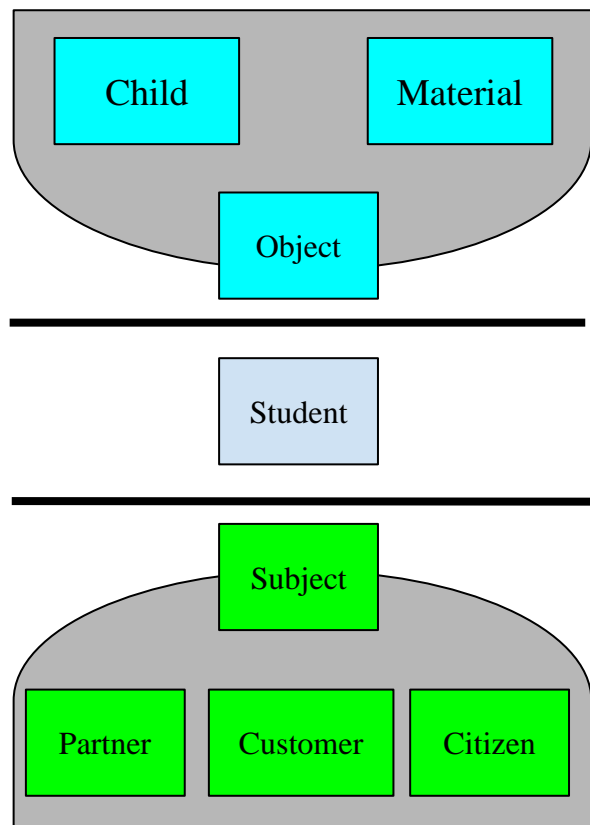


Figure 1. Student as object or subject of learning

1.5. VALUES

The question of institutional values is not on the current agenda of T-university. The answer to that is simple: people think that it is not the priority. However, as values have a special status at the institution - ignoring this question can result in absolute disaster for the institutional idea [Youngreen, Moore, p. 586]. It is important for the T-university for several reasons. First, new principles give new values. The principles of the partnership, student-oriented learning, change as a tool for the progression demand new values. The lack of understanding of that concept moves us to the next reason. Second, new educational space requires new thinking. It means that the old vision of what education was, most likely, will not work in the new one. The idea to change always struggles with the personality and new thinking is a tool to create the idea, vision and goals. Third, people first, values second. Values do not appear by themselves or from documents. They come from people who have similar principles and thinking. In the situation when the values are given to the group of people by authority, they act as it is obligatory. It does not create the understanding why this values value. People should understand the importance of the values for themselves. Otherwise, it is pointless and does not give any benefits for the transformers.

The values at the T-university are important as they come as a support for the feedback and overall idea of the partnership. When students, professors and administration do not take part in the communication, we can make a conclusion that there is no collaboration between educational actors. From the students and professors it works as information from the field, from administration it works as a material for analysis and developing the plan of action according to the idea, values and goals.

1.6. THE SCHOOL X AND T-UNIVERSITY

The School X is a first attempt to experiment with IST at the DSTU. School X is a new engineering institution. It changes the idea of the student-engineer. New engineers should be open-minded, ready to deal with unexpected situations and contribute to the society around them. School X was established in 2019 as a project for the 5-100 initiative. School X introduced IST for students, student-oriented learning and competency-based approach. The T-university is a continuation of the School X idea. The bigger, better and stronger idea for as many bachelor degrees as possible. The experience of the first educational greenfield was used in the T-university at the project-design stage and execution. Nonetheless, some points were missed. For example, institutional values and work with student subjectivity. They affected the implementation of feedback. It will be covered in the Implementation part.

1.7. RESEARCH OBJECT AND QUESTION

Based on the part above, the objective of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the feedback system based on aspects of competencies, values and student partnership. The assumption is that it will increase the number of reports, their quality and give more detailed information of what is needed for the faster solution.

Specifically, this thesis aims to answer the following research question:

- 1) Will the number and quality of reports from students with low authority level improve when feedback pays attention to the core ideas of the institution?

CHAPTER 2. WHAT WAS DONE BEFORE THE BACKFIRE

For that thesis the idea feedback is summed up in the name “Backfire”. The name was chosen for several reasons. You fire back to hit the target. To fire you need to analyse your position and position of your target. Backfire is the analysis of self, situation and actions. Three aspects play their role too. Value - personal development of self, Competencies - analytical skills for self-reflection and critical thinking, Partnership - actions transformed into contribution to the educational space and IST.

It is a short but important part to cover. The many ideas that created Backfire were a combination of the previous work, analysis and literature review of the work at T-university.

2.1. EVALUATION OF COMPETENCIES

One of the most important things that T-university has to offer is a competency-based model of education. It is told that through the action learning competencies will be formed to help students with their future personal and professional life. As it was told before, it is based on the work of Shchedrovitskiy and his vision of how the learning should be done.

Despite the focus of T-university on competencies, they are not fully developed. Review of T-university official documents do not show how to evaluate the level of competencies obtained by students. There was a working agenda to create a competency center that would take this work for themselves. Unfortunately, there are no steps that were performed. The competencies are in the state of development.

The list of competencies was based on the values that T-university wants to present. They are the basis for the competency-based learning and student partnership. In that case, Backfire targets to get information from the students and professor about the current situation with the competencies in the classroom.

2.2. VALUES

The current stage of values development does not come far away from the competencies. Values of T-universities are:

- 1) Academic trust
- 2) Healthcare
- 3) Responsibility
- 4) Personal development

The values lack description. For that purpose the group to work with it was introduced. In the beginning, there was one person. Despite that, a group of one administration worker and four students was formed. After several meetings and brainstorm sessions the idea to create a short value program was introduced. Moreover, there was a decision to create an instrument that will show true values of the present first-year students and integrate them into the value list. The goal of the values is to support the educational environment that develops a new global citizen. It was decided to create the framework of values, rules, find out how they are transferred from group to person and instrument to control the process.

To start with the value program eight questions were positioned as important:

- 1) What is the value?
- 2) What is the role of value in institutional culture?
- 3) What values help to work with positioning?
- 4) What makes value valuable?
- 5) Is value physical or mental?
- 6) Who needs values?
- 7) What is the current situation? Real and false values
- 8) What is the result we want?

The questions were distributed between the members of the working group. The work is still in progress. Next step will be to analyse the values of students and decide should the value list be reformed or not.

There are several circumstances that slow the work. First, the lack of experience. The value group does not have experience of running a project group. Students do not have experience working on projects. It creates situations when it is hard to decide about the next step. Second, values are a group-oriented issue. There are difficulties in understanding how the working group can decide for others and what values they should appropriate. The values are determining the environment. However, the new-comers must be told that they need such values because it can be impossible to live in such a space without them. Third, people at the T-university do not have these values. It creates dissonance when the people of the educational space do not correspond to its needs. The students who enter such institutions see two worlds: a world of ideas where values exist and a real world where these values are not present or corrupted. The values can not stand before the people because only people give meaning to values.

The feedback here is the tool that will help to understand the current situation with the values as feedback takes the value list into consideration. It should help to gather more info for the further plan of action. The values can not be ignored as they are the face of the institution [Duck, pp. 271-277].

2.3. FEEDBACK

The urgency for the feedback came into action when it was realised that there is no coherent source of information of what is happening at the elective space. The chair of elective space is a person with the School X background. He thinks that educational courses must fulfil students' deficits in knowledge and skills. It is impossible to understand without the feedback system because otherwise it will be a spontaneous plan of action. Moreover, feedback is a great tool for the transformational institution [Volyanskaya, p. 47]. It is a possibility to

admit mistakes for future personal and institutional growth. It is important to understand that a new educational space has its flaws. Better for the young transformation team to show success and mistakes publicly. It gives bonus points from the rector, pro-rector, investors, inner and outside stakeholders. It gives the opportunity to show to others that: «Yes, we have problems but we are ready to overcome them. For that we have developed the plan of actions which consists of ...».

Information from feedback helps to develop and execute steps that are needed for the T-university to become truly transformational. Why are competencies and values important? They do affect the idea, method, questions and further work with the information. It is impossible to collect feedback that does not correspond to those aspects. Without them the student partnership is impossible as they form and protect student authority and the right to have a voice. For that reason feedback should be unique for every institution.

CHAPTER 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The target of the thesis was to analyse, prepare and implement the form of feedback that would help the administration of T-university to develop the plan of actions to show students that they are real contributors to their personal education. The feedback here is seen as a possible instrument to develop the partnership through the students' subjectivity. The partnership includes many topics that must be taken into consideration as values of the institution and student role [Yigit, Fatih, 2016; Breznik & Law, 2019; Tierney & Lanford, 2018; Levy, P., 2014; Merryfield et al, 2008; Volyanskaya, 2019], what is partnership and its difference to client-oriented approach [Klemenčič, 2012, 2016; Levy, P., 2014; Healey, M., Flint, A., Harrington, K., 2016; Matthews, Cook-Sather, and Healey, 2018; Merryfield et al, 2008], competencies, as they are important for the T-university idea, [Ehlers, 2020; Fagadar, Trip and Badulescu, 2021] and importance of the feedback as a reflection tool for all participants of the educational process [Nederhand, Auer, Giesbers, Scheepers & van der Gaag, 2022; Evans, Brownlie, & Horlin, 2022; Malecka, Boud & Carless, 2020; Nathenson., & Henderson, 1980; Zierer, K., & Wisniewski, 2018].

Feedback is a powerful tool to motivate, change or reward people's behaviour [London, p. 4]. It can support the institution with information about our current progress and how close they are to their goals. In education, feedback is used for the same purpose. It is a tool that can analyse, develop a plan of actions and enhance teaching and learning process, maintenance of educational space and hiring process.

In this thesis feedback is based on three elements, as they are seen as important to the idea of T-university: values, competencies and student partnership. All three are equally important but come in a row. Starting with values, as the basis for development, gaining competencies, as the results of self-education, and coming to partnership between institution and students, as a

mutual benefit for education. The design of feedback is focused on the student who has a low authority level. With the help of three elements it was planned to achieve more responses and better quality of information. Also to answer a question: does the feedback system show the level of students' authority to form the partnership?

3.1. VALUES

What is the value and why is it important to give them a high priority? There are some social scientists who tried to come up with the term. Barrett [p. 12] connects value with the behaviour as the important crucial part of it. For Bond [p. 6] is something that every person has. Lytras and Visviz [p. 3] define it as the way to solve social challenges and problems. Covey [p. 15] defines values as «beliefs and opinions that people hold regarding specific issues or ideas, and are ultimately internal, subjective, and malleable». They may change as demands or needs change. If a given belief or opinion is something that might be altered if the conditions are right, then it is a value. Values are important in expressing our individual beliefs and opinions, and they can be used tactically to accomplish certain objectives based on our current circumstances, demands, and needs. Values can ultimately reflect or determine the current but potentially alterable goals that we have in our professional, family, and personal life. It is a useful definition as it works with the deeper level of values - principles. Covey [pp. 15-16] defines them as «they are self-evident and can easily be validated by any individual. It is almost as if these principles or natural laws are part of the human condition, part of the human consciousness, part of the human conscience. They seem to exist in all human beings, regardless of social conditioning and loyalty to them, even though they might be submerged or numbed by conditions or disloyalty». They often concern human behaviour and govern interactions between people. It is important for the thesis as it helps to determine the

educational principles of T-university and values inside the educational environment.

Values of higher education institutions directly affect teaching and learning. As values form the institutional goal and the image of the institution [Spiten et al, p.154](Figure 2). The teaching and learning are determined by the goal the institution wants to achieve. For T-university it means that the value of competencies dictates the certain formats or principles of learning. The activity approach is chosen as the main one as according to Schedrovitskiy [p. 120] the learning happens with the experience gained through self-reflection of activities performed.

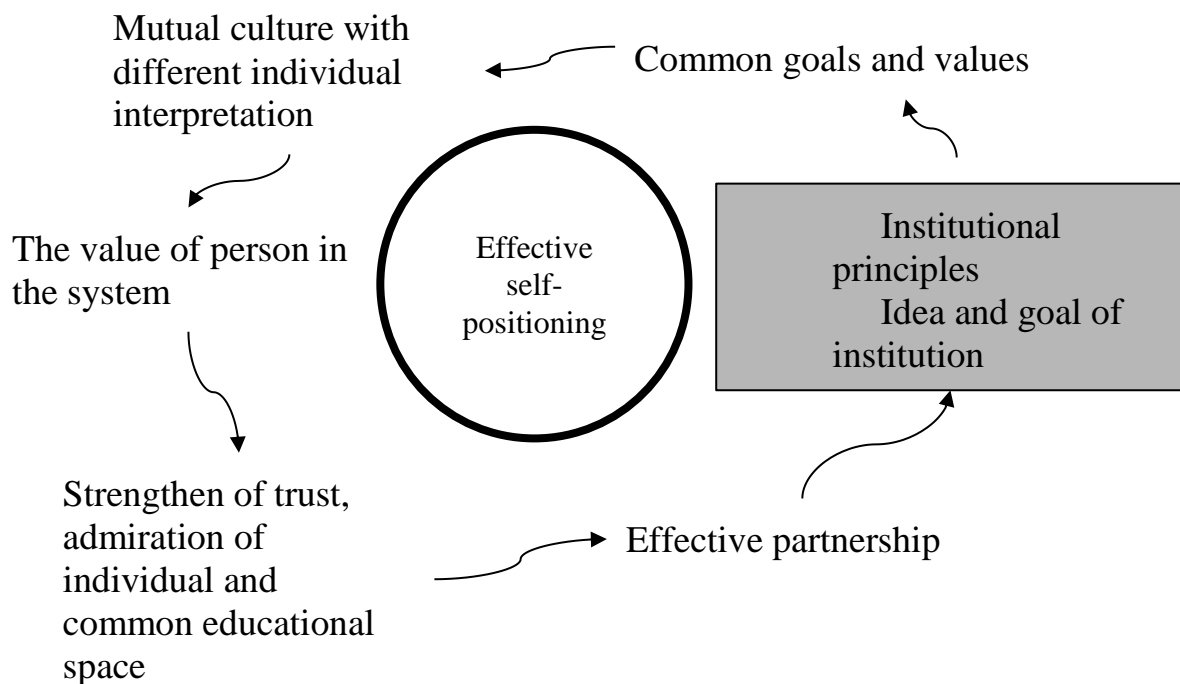


Figure 2. Effective self-positioning based on values and effect on partnership

Values form institutional culture and goals [Duck, pp. 79-88]. It can be used to help to understand the importance of feedback. Students should see the benefits and end effect of feedback and their role in it. It should be integrated into institutional culture to develop partnership with students.

Values are an inseparable component of institutional culture and educational principles. It is the reason why they were included in the Backfire.

3.2. COMPETENCIES

As it was stated previously, a competency-based model of learning is a main one at the T-university. This educational greenfield is based on the experience of the School X which has a hard influence of Schedrovitky understanding of teaching, learning and competencies. Competencies are produced from action. However, not every action is effective in terms of learning. It leads us to the thinking that is a basis for all learning. According to Schedrovitsky [Developing education and thinking pedagogy, 2022] thinking affects the behaviour which determines the action (Figure 3). Thinking transforms the behaviour into the action. The actions and behaviour can not be changed if the thinking stays the same.

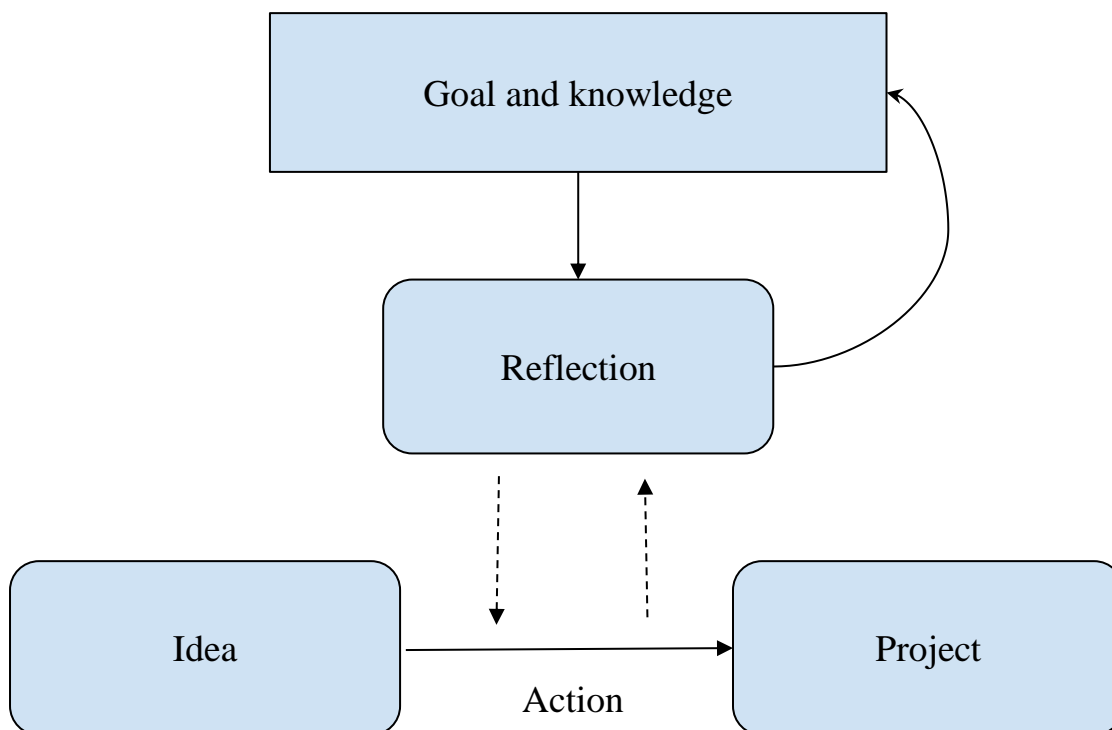


Figure 3. Reflection as learning

It determined the thinking as the reflection. It is the only way to get new knowledge and skills. Competencies are the product of reflection on action.

In addition, to the Backfire the different understanding of competencies was added. In his book «Future skills» Ulf-Daniel Elhers describes the future

skills as «ability to act successfully on a complex problem in a future unknown context of action» [p. 52]. The concept of future skills crosses with many aspects of the competencies. For that reason, some ideas of future skills were used in the thesis. The three dimensions of future skills helped to organise the data distribution in the Backfire. These dimensions are subjective, objective and social. Subjective dimension includes personal views, individual abilities to learn, adapt and develop personal productivity. In Backfire subjective transformed into the personal pool of questions. Personal works with one's vision, progress and abilities of self-reflection. Objective dimension includes the ability of a person to self-organise in relation to an object. It is about how to work with the object. In Backfire objective transformed into the educational pool of questions. Educational works with how a person sets goals, uses the educational tool to reach these goals and analyses the teaching and learning environment. Social dimension includes the person's ability to work with the environment. It is the ability to analyse and reorganise, if needed, personal beliefs, social roles or structures inside. In Backfire social transformed into the administrative pool of questions. It works with the student's understanding of the educational environment and possible ways to change it. It is a way that students can contribute to their own learning and institution.

This thesis understands competencies as the product of thoughtful action developed by a person who is ready to contribute to the future of the society. Backfire takes this understanding into consideration.

3.3. STUDENT PARTNERSHIP

Student partnership is one of the most common topics around higher education worldwide in the 21st century. Students as partners to the academic community go through many debates on assessment, feedback, teaching and learning process, experimenting with educational environment, institution integration into the society and internalisation. Interest in the concept is

international. There are debates about how we see our students. Nowadays, in the field of Russian Higher Education, they are seen as passive consumers of knowledge who do not play a major part in their own learning [Kisel, Dubskih, Butiv, p.100; Yagupov, p. 9]. The future education work should pay attention to global problems and the idea to make students as partners is purely crucial for the contribution into the mutual solutions.

The concepts such as student partnership, involvement in the administrating, student citizenship and student engagement gained interest in the last decade [Peters & Mathias, 2018; Holen et al, 2021; Kennedy et al, 2019]. These concepts can be understood differently: as more student-centred or student-driven learning, as reaction to modern reforms or as possible solutions to monogamy in the teaching, learning and science communities. Student partnership is an ongoing process in many countries such as Norway, USA, UK, Australia. However, it is a concept that still lacks a solid theoretical contribution [Mercer-Mapstone and Bovill, pp. 1-17].

Student partnership is not a new idea. For example, it can be connected with the concepts of Lev Vigotsky and John Dewey as students become the contributors of their learning and teacher's learning. These approaches dictate the changes into the educational program, environment and maintenance from the point of student vision of how it would be suitable for them. It is needed to pose a question here: why is it important for Higher Education students to be partners but not customers? It is a good question that has no right or wrong answer. First, we must understand - do we see students as subjects or objects of teaching and learning? To create a new visioner or person capable of contributing to society, students should have agency. As Klemenčič [2016, p. 1] stated, agency is «students' capacity to intervene in their higher education environment for the purpose of achieving self-formation and well-being...». The same idea T-university has in its core design. To create a student that is capable of self-learning and self-reflection, determining own goals and finding a job satisfying personal

needs. Second, we need to understand how to create an environment where students can be responsible for their own learning trajectories. It induces students to critically think about their own learning. The environment should help students with answering the question such as: «what do I expect from my learning?» or «what person I would be after my education?». There are no direct answers but the institution gives opportunities and instruments that support personal research. Third, students should become full members of the communities of their universities. Student partnership is based on the idea that students have different rights and responsibilities. These aspects should serve the purpose of mutual benefit. Students support the institution and the institution pays back. There are two possible drawbacks. First is consumerism or when students see them as customers. Partnership has nothing to do with the market values but has a lot in common with friendship where people care about and support each other. Second is individualism. There is no idea that individualism is a harmful idea. However, to create a partnership there should be a sense of collective belonging. It is a challenging task to combine them. Klemenčič [2016,p. 1] puts it this way: «what can I get for myself and how can I promote myself and do my self-formation and achieve my own personal well-being, but also concern about what can a student do as a member or as a citizen of the academic community of his/her institution, for the community to which she/he essentially belong.»

In Russian Higher Education it is a topic of debate. The partnership is about choice and responsibility of choice made. Andrey Volkov and Dara Melnyk [pp. 31-32] have an article about autonomy of the universities in which the student's ability to form individual study tracks plays a significant role in the teaching and learning process. Such an approach can be implemented in the educational spaces with enough autonomy to play with the risks choice makes. When students have a right to choose their courses, professors or styles of learning, they become partners. They contribute to personal education and the educational environment. Nonetheless, students should be aware that partnership comes with responsibility.

If the system gives you the opportunity to create your own study track, the only person to blame when a student is not happy with the choice made is himself.

The thesis understands student partnership as the ultimate goal of T-university. Backfire is the tool to check the progress on partnership development.

3.4. FEEDBACK

Feedback is a process in higher education that can be improved gradually. There is evidence that student feedback can enhance the educational experience. At the ITMO university student feedback helped to change the soft-skill module [Kirrilova, 2020]. Some classes were moved to online, the additional page was created with full module description and the classes were moved to the second part of the day. However, there are negative examples. In 2016 study was conducted including english and wales students [Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2016]. The results have shown that students are not satisfied with the quality of feedback and its organisation. It is absolutely crucial for the feedback that students, professors, and university staff understand of how it operates and appreciate how it can influence the curriculum, IST, students competencies, institutional values and university building [Carless, Boud, pp. 1316-1317].

To develop the awareness of feedback importance - the feedback literacy should be developed. The feedback has a strong connection with the social constructivist learning theory. Social constructivist theory states that the independence of social and individual processes are the basis for constructing knowledge. Feedback in that sense becomes the perception of the individual. It is constructed through dialogue, people beliefs and culture and way of thinking [Price, Handley, Millar, p. 880]. In addition, the concept of tacit knowledge should be taken into consideration. Students should develop tacit knowledge in order to understand the importance of the feedback process and the judgements it creates. The tacit knowledge develops with the observation, imitation and

participation in constant dialogue with all participants of the educational environment [Bloxham, Campbell, pp. 291-292]. The feedback is about the improvement not justifying the grade [Dawson et al, pp. 35-36]. Actually, many responses do not point out the object of improvement. It is the most important point that should be taken into consideration.

Backfire is about enhancing the quality of education, mutual respect and better conditions for every person inside the university. This thesis is focused on the teaching and learning process, student contribution to the institution and maintenance of the educational process.

CHAPTER 4. METHODS

4.1. PARTICIPANTS

Participants were students from the educational greenfield: School X and T-university. Students represent different personal interests in future majors. There was no division of Humanities, IT, physical sciences, social sciences and life sciences. In addition, there were professors from T-university, particularly from the elective space (Table 1). Some of the professors do not work at DSTU or Rostov-on-Don. All three groups were given their own version of feedback, according to the appropriate competencies, values and a partnership idea. To avoid any bias, several things were done. First, a person who analyses information known as little as much about students and professors. Second, the feedback was anonymous. It means no email collection, no names, and no educational groups. Third, students and professors will get the report with anonymised data.

Overall number of participants:

Table 1

Number of participants

Participants	Number of people	Years/Institution
School X students	172	1,2,3
T-university students	385	1
T-university professors	15	T-university, DSTU

4.2. METHODOLOGY

4.2.1. QUANTATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESERACH

The thesis works with a great amount of information. For that purpose the combination of quantitative and qualitative is required for the full understanding of the situation.

The quantitative information is needed for the preliminary analysis. It helps to understand what the main goal of the focus groups should be. It also can affect the future action plan. It involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach of the subject matter [Denzin, Lincoln, p. 774]. The precise quantitative data can show things in their natural setting which for us is highly important because it is impossible to be presented at every class at the university. The goal is to frame information and interpret for our own good. For the qualitative methods, surveys and secondary data, particularly the analysis of previous feedback sessions, were used. Secondary data analysis helps to identify possible barriers to the feedback and survey helps to work with the big number of participants. Qualitative research involves the use of personal experience, basic module information and maintenance of teaching and learning. It is basically a description of everyday teaching and learning routine. For the qualitative methods, focus groups were chosen. The assumption is that most students require personal dialogue to give qualitative data that can be used.

Due to the fact that feedback works with the personal interpretations of the inner processes, qualitative research is a suitable choice. The qualitative method was used in both versions of Backfire. However, the School X version heavily depended on written answers. The different approach was chosen for the T-university students, as it is assumed that they have a lower level of subjectivity. The assumption is based on several factors such as the size of the student body and the less direct work with the authority development. The qualitative analysis for T-university was put into the focus groups. The qualitative feedback has a stronger implementation when we consider the question of performance [Amaratunga, Baldry, pp. 219-221]. As for us important to understand what is working and what is not, we can not ignore the qualitative data. In addition, people are more engaged and motivated when they are directly asked e.g. how it is possible to contribute to the future module or elective space as a whole. In the

focus groups the whole idea is to get the answers to get an understanding [Bryman, Bell, pp. 361-367].

4.2.2. FOCUS GROUPS

In this thesis, the Steward's [Sim & Waterfield, p. 3004] definition of focus group is used. It is "a type of group discussion about a topic under the guidance of a trained group moderator". The focus groups are created to gather more information on raised issues in the quantitative part of the feedback. It is used to get in-depth understanding of social issues in the teaching and learning process.

The group will be formed on the basis of quantitative research. Students will be divided into five groups depending on the answers with the lowest scores. Five groups are goal-setting, effort, mental and physical state, improvements of elective and quality of teaching. All students from the module will be asked to take part in a focus group. From six to ten students are needed. One should be aware of the ethical side of the question and pay the maximum respect to the participants and information they will share. The moral ground is crucial in the notion of autonomy. By any means, the moderator should not take any actions that can threaten the participants, change the initial idea of the participant. The moderator should create a protecting and supportive environment, and pay attention to the mutual respect for persons [Sim & Waterfield, p. 3018].

Two issues that must be taken into consideration. First issue, there is a chance that method and design would be useless as they can be to some extent emergent. From that point of view, the result of the focus group discussion can differ a lot from the expected one. In that case, the focus group is dependent on the participants. Participants can be affected by the others. For example, it is a common situation that during one discussion the participant can raise an issue that is not pre-designed by the moderator. Moreover, it is harder to control the group that conducts a face-to-face interview. Participants can decline to answer a particular question. It happens more in a group than individually [Sim &

Waterfield, p. 3005]. Second issue, the possibility to express one's opinion. If the participant wants to make a contribution to the group discussion, there should be such a possibility. Hence, moderators should pay attention to the status of group dynamic. Also, the moderator's goal is to collect a co-productive product of group discussion not the personal opinions.

The key elements of the focus group are the questions. There should be quality over quantity. For that reason, every question should fall into one of three categories: entering, research and exit.

Engagement questions: make them comfortable with the topic of discussion

Exploration questions: get the information to fulfil the backfire blind spots

Exit question: how to perform better and/or check to see if anything was missed in the discussion.

4.3. RICE METHOD

RICE is the prioritising method that is commonly used in marketing. It measures a future by four characteristics: Reach, Impact, Confidence and Effort. In the thesis, it was adapted to prioritise the negative situation in the T-university teaching and learning processes (Figure 4). The purpose was to identify the issues that require immediate response from the institution workers as there is the situation when people do not understand what must be prioritised and dealt with immediately.

Reach: the amount of people are affected by the situation. For example, the amount of students that do not understand the connection between content of the module and final task.

Impact: what effect does the situation have on every person?

- 3 - huge effect
- 2 - good effect
- 1 - average effect
- 0,5 - weak effect

For example, is the misunderstanding of the content and final project will affect the educational result?

Confidence: how are we sure of the Reach and Impact? Do we have enough information to confirm the information?

- 100% - High confidence level
- 80% - Average confidence level
- 50% - Low confidence level

For example, are we sure that information that we have from feedback corresponds to reality?

Effort: how much time do we need to invest into the solution of the situation to resolve it? This characteristic is measured in people per month.

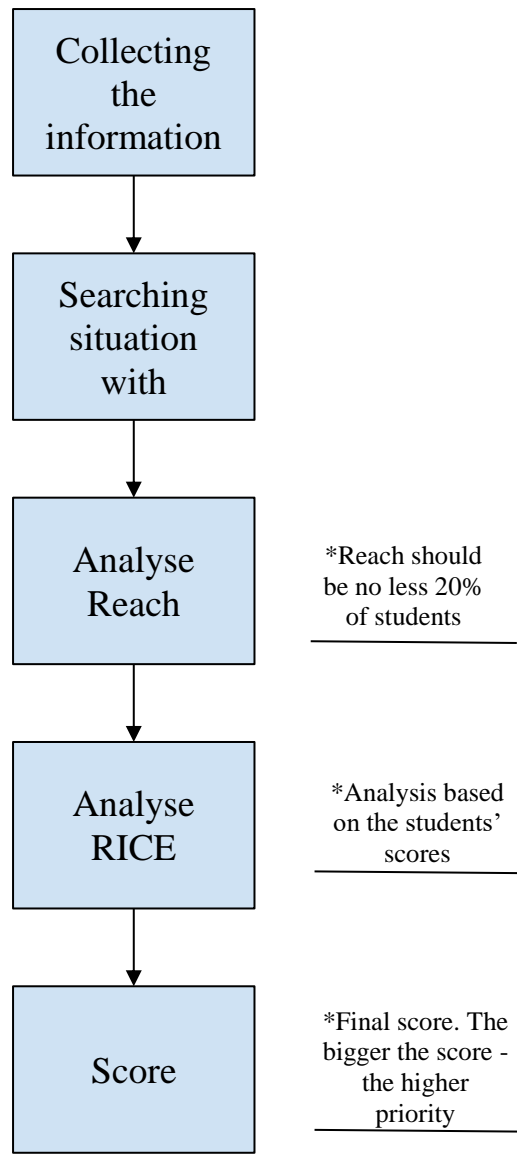


Figure 4. Process of RICE

All characteristics are combined in one formula (Figure 5) that helps to determine the priority of the situations.

$$\frac{\text{Reach} \times \text{Impact} \times \text{Confidence}}{\text{Effort}} = \text{Score}$$

Figure 5. RICE Formula

Advantages:

- 1) Method reduces the effect of prejudice;
- 2) It helps to determine SMART goals.

Disadvantages:

- 1) Methods do not correspond with the dependence;
- 2) It is not 100% accurate.

In this thesis, RICE is a supporting tool to determine focus groups. It is not recommended to base final decisions only on RICE score.

4.4. DEVIATION OF INFORMATION

Information should be divided into three distinct categories for the easier analysis (EPA):

- **Education:** knowledge, professor work, homework, work in class, instruments, everything connected with the module filling, quality of course material
- **Administration:** organisation of SKIF.DO¹, google class, communication, information about the module, the correspondence of the content to the module schemata
- **Personal:** Is there any progress? Do people understand what they are doing?

After all the information is found it should be analysed and described. For example, 5 of 20 students think that the module content does not correspond and will not help in preparation for the final project. In analysis it means: 25% of students think that content does not help in preparation for the final project. It is an educational issue that must be taken into consideration as fast as possible.

¹ SKIF.DO - LMS of DSTU. It is used for syllabus, running tests, storing learning materials and communication between students and professors.

List of urgency (from the highest to lowest):

- 1) Educational
- 2) Personal
- 3) Administration

4.5. PROCEDURE

Backfire should be done two times per module: in the middle and after the module. The main idea is in three weeks - to prepare the information for the professor to change content or help administration to decide if there is a need to interfere in the module. The Backfire at the end of the module also gives the picture of it. It affects the decision of necessary changes or realisation of the module at all. There will be a team that will analyse the feedback of students and prepare a report for the professor and students (Figure 6). If there is a demand for additional information on a hard topic or misunderstanding of relevance of knowledge given - professor should change the future classes due to the requests. Students should be aware that changes in the program will affect expectations of the professor. Also students can give a score from 1-5 to the module quality.

All the data should be open for everyone. The only hidden information is student names. However, there will be an option to show the name for their own purposes (they want additional challenge, different approach, etc.).

For the students there will be an option to use audio and video. Audio and video messages should be transformed into text messages for everyone to read because audio and video cannot be anonymous. The data and analysis should be directly sent to the professors and owner of the module.

If the professor uses this feedback as an option to threaten the students - students can write a bill of complaint. Students must get evidence that the threat took place (audio, video recordings) or if more than 80% of students in class prove it with their words. The investigation should take place immediately and finish in under a week.

The first field for experiments were electives. It contains 15 elective modules. Information is needed to understand the need for the changes in the module from the professor, motivation from students and possible problems with modules from the point of administration.

The three main questions must be asked at any backfire be asked:

- 1) Do you feel any progress in skills and knowledge?
- 2) How can they help you?
- 3) What should you change for your future personal progress?

All questions are important for the development of competencies and values. It is a kind of mental task for participants to use critical, analytical thinking and self-reflection. Value of development is impossible without a reflection of one's actions. They should be in every feedback. It is a requirement for students and professors feedback.

There is a set of formats, restrictions, rules and a student involvement strategy that were created during the research. They form the basic principles of Backfire. It is suitable for the face-to-face interview, a question at the end of google form or audio message.

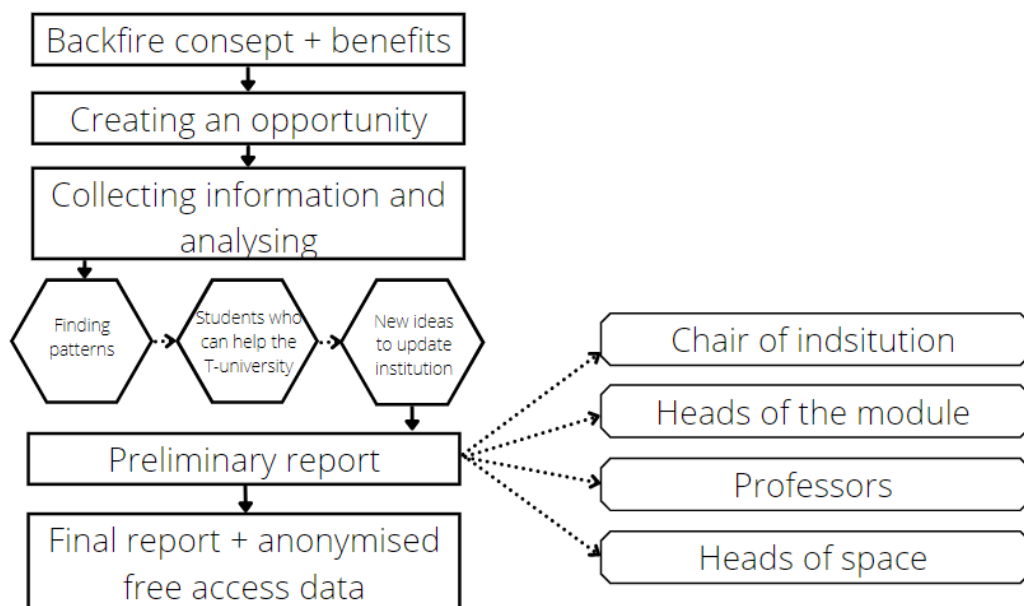


Figure 6. The full procedure of analysis

Formats:

Textbox, audio and video messages (in the future iteration)

Restrictions:

- 1) No swear words;
- 2) Video and audio no longer than 30 sec;
- 3) Three questions must be covered;
- 4) No individuals or names. ONLY about the professional part of education.

Rules:

- 1) Student names do not go anywhere;
- 2) Analytical report should be done and provided in 3 days;
- 3) The talks are about common results, not individual ones;
- 4) First rule can be passed, if a student in Backfire says that he/she wants to be heard by the professor and gives permission to share the results.

Access:

Few is better. Analytical team and the head of the department.

Prerequisites for team members:

- 1) Inner motivation for the best;
- 2) Critical thinking;
- 3) Analytical thinking.

Steps of implementation:**1) Explain the concept of the Backfire.**

The idea of this Backfire is to provide all necessary information about the student, professor, class and environment to increase the quality of the teaching and learning. It is an additional practice for the students to self-analyse and for the institution to use the information for enhancement of education. Backfire should be used for the good of students, institutions and every person around. It is extremely prohibited to use Backfire as a source for punishment.

2) Show students future benefits.

People who share information should be rewarded. The best reward that feedback can produce is the action that enhances the reality. Also, additional practice benefits students in their personal future decisions and actions but it is the hidden agenda.

3) Make a friendly environment.

Feedback is not an obligatory task. It is not about giving students scores. The mission is to help students with their personal trajectories for future development, to understand their strength and weakness and overcome it, and to establish the place for personal and professional growth. Person who implements it is a partner, a more knowledgeable one, but a partner.

4) Collect the Backfire.

The process of collection should be easy and quick. Students did their job by giving feedback. It is important to have some respect for their effort and reduce the number of possible drawbacks.

5) Do not share it with outsiders.

No names, no academic groups, no degree, no sex, no appearance. NOTHING! It is confidential.

6) Analyse and share the results.

You should go through all feedback and analyse it. One should be aware of the high importance of this job. The results will affect the next step, possibly, the most important.

7) Plan, share and execute.

Feedback is useless for the academic society, institution and students without action it creates. Analyse gives a vision of what might be the cause of trouble or obstacles. Plans must be based on this vision in order to create an opportunity for the development. When one shares the plan, the administration announces the future changes and takes responsibility for it. Execution is the hardest part. One must be aware of all forces that will turn against. The changes

are essential because they show the passion of the institution to change. It also shows the work of the Backfire which is of high importance.

4.6. DATA ANALYSIS

The data will be divided into five group to determine future questions for the focus groups (Table 2):

Table 2

Data deviation according to Backfire categories

Topic	Works with	Category
Goal for elective	Student self-reflection, goal setting, motivation, professor instructions	Personal Educational
Effort	Student motivation	Personal
Physical and mental state	Educational environment, student healthcare, motivation, self-reflection	Personal Administrative
Improving the elective	Educational environment, organisation of system, analysis of teaching and learning, analytical and critical thinking	Personal Educational Administrative
The quality of the teaching	Analysis of teaching and learning, analytical and critical thinking, professor instructions	Personal Educational Administrative

Goal for elective:

Goal-setting is one of the key competencies. It is crucial for self-directed learning. It is one of the components of Schedrovitsky learner thinking. The ability to set goals creates an individual.

Effort:

In this thesis, it is connected with the motivation. Our awareness of that should give us a food for thought as what our students understand as being

motivated. T-university's goal is to collect, analyse and design the protocols on how to work with it.

Physical and mental state:

Mental issues affect the physical state. According to the study conducted at Bangor university [Marcora, Staiano, Manning, p. 862], mental health can result in anxiety and depression and lead to decline of a student's physical health.

Improving the elective:

Students' contribution to the syllabus is highly important. They are directly affected by it. Only students can give a full picture about the teaching program that treats them as subjects or objects of education.

The quality of teaching:

To analyse the quality of teaching requires self-reflection and work with contexts. It is a massive amount of work on how teaching affects the individual education. It results in mutual benefit for students and professors.

T-university pays attention to these aspects of education because it is our responsibility to act better. T-university means transformational and change is not possible without the goal, analysis and help from other participants of the educational environment. The analysis of the results should be presented in the form of a report for everyone to read.

4.7. REPORT

The openness and fairness should become the basic principles of the institution that wants to achieve student partnership. The report of the results is crucial as it shows the readiness for the cooperation, to admit and work on own mistakes, achieve better educational results and pay respect to the feedback provided. There should be two reports. First one is about the feedback results. The report is done in a way as it is easy and entertaining to read. The second is about the plan of actions that will be taken in order to increase the quality of the educational process. Both should be public. It is a message to the participants of

the education process that they are heard and intuition cares about them.

The first report consists of:

- 1) List of courses
- 2) Number of participated students
- 3) Quantitative results
 - a) List of questions
 - b) The quality of course
 - c) The quality of teaching
 - d) The quality of learning material
 - e) Syllabus
 - f) Student deficits
 - g) Communication and feedback
- 4) Qualitative results
 - a) List of questions and the procedure
 - b) Comments about course quality
 - c) Comments about deficits and educational results
 - d) Comments about improving the course
- 5) RICE
- 6) Nominations
- 7) Best quotes

Points from 1 to 5 are essential and must be covered. It is crucial to the idea of Backfire to be open about positive and negative aspects of education. There are two points that have not been covered yet. Nominations and quotes act as the fan service. The idea is to please the audience and show passion for the institution for partnership. They were done with humour to relieve the possible pain from negative aspects. They are cheerful points for everyone that cheers for a change and induce positive thinking.

The second report should be a plan of action that will be taken. This thesis does not provide the example but the idea is the same as the first report. The name

of the course, reported problem, results of the focus group and then the actions if the problem existed. It should have a deadline inside for others to see when it is possible to see the results of actions. It would be better to post updates in the communication channels if there are any. At the T-university it can be done at the official Telegram channel.

4.8. FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

It is a small guide that was created for the moderators to follow and complete the focus group discussion. It should be noted that this guide was created according to the needs of the T-university and it is heavily dependent on the ideas presented in Backfire.

The focus group consists of:

- A moderator
- From 6 to 10 students
- From 5 to 8 questions

Important note to remember: this is not a debate, not a group therapy. It is a gathering of information for making further decisions. This is more of a discussion in which you need to find the information that the chair of the elective space needs.

Focus groups on electives gather on a common theme which five of them:

- 1) Goal for elective (goal) **personal and educational;**
- 2) Effort (motivation) (motivation) **personal;**
- 3) Physical and mental state (health) **personal;**
- 4) Improving the elective (update) **admin;**
- 5) The quality of the teaching (quality) **educational and administrative.**

The process of working with information (Figure 7):

1. Conduct a survey;
2. Determine the average value of answers for all questions;

3. Go to the elective groups with questions, where the value of the answers is below average;
4. Find out the situation (at least 20% of the total number of students must confirm the answers);
5. Students who have confirmed the answers get into a focus group;
6. Working with a focus group;
7. Analysis of the results obtained;
8. Solution development;
9. Making decisions on the situation;
10. Implementation of the solution.

Middle average:

Effort
Goal
Update
State

T-university and elective
space ideas

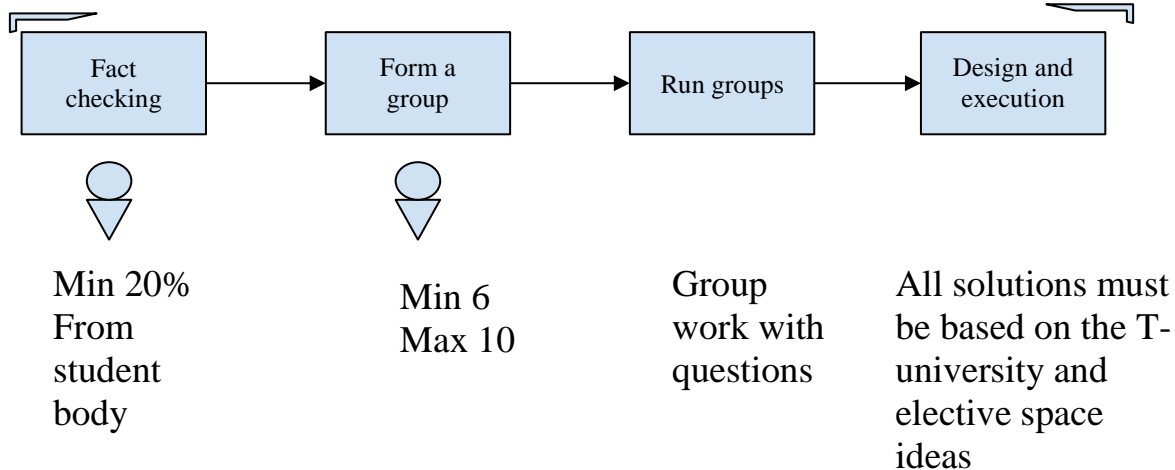


Figure 7. How to work with focus group

Questions for the focus group:

- There should be 5-8 questions
- They should be short and to the point
- There should be no duality in questions
- Questions should be written in such a way that it is necessary to give a detailed answer

The questions should be:

- Input: to introduce participants to the topic
- Research: collecting basic information
- Exit: summing up, find what you missed during the discussion

Preliminary questions for the **Goal**:

1. Do you notice in others the desire for something?
2. Do you know what you need from the university?
3. Is it difficult for you to set goals?
4. Do I need to set goals?
5. Do you have a sense of satisfaction when you reach a goal?
6. Do you need help setting goals?

Questions for **Effort**:

1. Why does a person have a desire to learn?
2. Why do you learn?
3. Do you have a motivation to learn?
4. Is it difficult to motivate yourself?
5. What demotivates you at the university?
6. What should be changed to increase your motivation?

Questions for the **State**:

1. Why do you think the fashion for taking care of the student's condition is a trend?
2. Is it worth monitoring the physical and mental state of the participants in the process?
3. Does your mental state affect you?
4. What affects you at the university?
5. How can it be changed in a better way?

Questions for **Update**:

1. Why should education be improved?
2. Constant change or Constanta?

3. Do you have ideas on how to update a course?
4. Why are these ideas worth trying?
5. Do you think professors would agree with your updates?
6. Anything else to add?

Questions for **Quality**:

- 1) What is the quality of teaching?
- 2) Have you ever taught a person?
- 3) What should the professor be aware of?
- 4) How could the professor do it?
- 5) What would you change in teaching methods?

Data analysis:

It is necessary to create a separate Google table for each elective (Figure 8). Each focus group will be in a separate tab.

Each group discusses only one topic. For each question, it is required to collect enough information from each participant so that it is possible to form and restore the main idea.

For each question, it is worth defining a category: in order to be able to compose them on a common basis.

For example: for a question it is difficult for you to set goals, the following categories can be distinguished:

1. Difficulty
2. Uncertainty
3. Misunderstanding of the concept of goal

After collecting and assembling all the information, it is necessary to analyse it. It is important to find common and different points within the elective. Subsequently, it is recommended to compare these data for all modules. For each question, a small paragraph is written summarising the findings from all the answers.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Title of the elective			Categories		List of questions	
			A) Issues B) Uncertainty C) Goal		1) 2) 3) ...	
Group 1 - (Category)	Group 1 - Quality of teaching					
Questions (3-5 average)						
Question 3: Is it hard for you to set your goal?						
Category	Name	Answers				
B	Ivanov Ivan					
A	Ivanov Ivan					
C	Ivanov Ivan					
C	Ivanov Ivan					
A	Ivanov Ivan					
C	Ivanov Ivan					
B	Ivanov Ivan					
Results						
Question	Analysis					
Is it hard for you to state your goal?	Many students have issues with the goal tating. All the students do not understand the what goal is. This is the reason why it is impossible to set the IST for module					

Figure 8. Spreadsheet for moderator

CHAPTER 5. IMPLEMENTATION

5.1. FIRST ATTEMPT WITH SCHOOL X

First of all, the concept of backfire was presented to the chair of the institution as a possible way to work with the feedback. The reasons the chair would accept it are simple. There is a task from the vice-rector who started the T-university project to collect and analyse feedback for the enhancing teaching and learning process and maintenance of the educational environment as a whole. Moreover, at the DSTU PRIORITY 2030 program, there is a criteria of the student involvement in the contribution of the university. The feedback is effective tool for student integration into decision-making and administrating.

As it was mentioned before the feedback questions were based on the assumption that it would be beneficial to pay attention to the competencies, values and student partnership. Therefore, the feedback from for School X students was more complicated as it was accepted for them to have more self-authority as it is a more elite bachelor institution. The next table shows the questions (Table 3) for the first round of Backfire.

Table 3

The questions for School X with comments

Aspect	Question	Type of the question	Comments
General question	What is your name?	Open	School X want student to have responsibility for their words
General question	What is your group?	Open	Same as previous
General question	What is your module?	Choose one	Students choose a module from the list
Competencies	Do you understand the material?	Scale	From 1 to 5 To find out the about how the style of teaching is effective

Competencies/Partnership	How do you evaluate the learning materials?	Scale	From 1 to 5 Student should analyse the material and understand the future use of them
Values	Does learning material correspond to the syllabus?	Scale	From 1 to 5 Does the module deviate from the initial idea?
Competencies/Values	How do you evaluate the quality of feedback from professors?	Scale	From 1 to 5 Feedback is the key for learning and one of the basis of School X principles
Competencies/Values	How do you evaluate the tasks?	Scale	From 1 to 5 Students analyse the tasks according to the skills and knowledge given
Competencies/Partnership	How do you evaluate the quality of classes?	Scale	From 1 to 5 Students analyse the style of teaching and how it corresponds to their needs and deficits
Competencies/Partnership/Values	Give your feedback	Open	Students can comment other points and give their vision on how to update a module

As School X is an engineering school with the strong Schedrovitskiy influence, all the questions were mandatory. Also the written feedback is obligatory as it is one of the principles of School X: to give and receive feedback for personal learning and mutual benefit. More open questions would give more quality information to analyse. Quality feedback is an important part of the School X idea. It helps students to improve personally and professionally. For

that reason questions are focused on the competency component and exactly on critical thinking.

5.2. SCHOOL X RESULTS

The response from students was 33.58%, 58/172 students. It was enough to find patterns in the School X elective to understand the future plan of actions.

The points that will be taken into consideration:

1) More time will be focused on student awareness. The 33% do not satisfy the administration of School X. It is important to help students understand why it is crucial for them to give feedback in terms of their personal education.

2) Two elective courses will be redesigned. It was mentioned that in these two electives the format of learning and teaching methods do not correspond with the School X standards.

3) Four courses that were evaluated the best will be presented in the next term. New contracts will be signed with the professors of the courses.

4) RICE analysis requires more information. This method is heavily dependent on qualitative feedback. This time there was not enough data to do prioritisation. The focus groups will be introduced in the second attempt.

Backfire helps to satisfy the basic needs of the institution in information. However, the students' personal awareness is still a big issue. In the second attempt the assumption on how to work with it is to make it simple and qualitative information will be presented in forms of closed questions. It reduces the time on feedback writing and amount of the text. These qualitative questions will help to identify the problem zones and form focus groups for deeper analysis.

5.3. SECOND ATTEMPT WITH T-UNIVERSITY

As for T-university students, the feedback literacy is a developing process. There is data from 85 students. Information was collected in the form of personal dialogue. Students said that they do not see the value of the feedback. More than a half (50) do not send feedback anymore. It shows the low awareness of the students as the contributors to their own learning.

Taking into consideration the values, student partnership, competencies and the low awareness, a new set of questions were formed. It was anonymous to avoid any bias from the analytical group or elective space staff and give students a safe space to express their opinion (Table 4).

Table 4

The questions for T-university with comments

Aspect	Question	Type of the question	Comments
General question	What is your module?	Choose one	Students choose a module from the list
Competencies	How do you evaluate the module?	Scale	From 1 to 5 Overall score for the module
Competencies/Partnership	How do you evaluate the teaching process?	Scale	From 1 to 5 Was teaching satisfactory to students? In terms of their personal values
Competencies/Partnership	Did you manage to achieve your goal for the module?	Yes/No	Yes/No with variables To find out about if they go to module with a goal or not
Competencies/Values/Partnership	How much effort did you put into the module?	Choose one	Extremums between I do not care and physically and emotionally drained To see students motivation for the module
Competencies/Values	How do you	Choose one	The results about the

	evaluate your condition?		modules that showed the most emotionally and physically drained students are given to the tutors in case students will come to them
Competencies/Values /Partnership	Do you feel progress in knowledge and skills?	Yes/No	To find out does the module has a positive effect
Competencies/Values	If you evaluate your progress, could you get it without the module?	Yes/No	Yes/No with variables Addition to the previous question. Is it worth running the module in the future?
Competencies/Partnership	Would you recommend this course to other students?	Yes/No	If students recommend the module it is worth the time
Competencies/Partnership	Do you have ideas on how to update the module?	Yes/No	Critical reflection on the organisation, teaching and learning and personal effort
Competencies/Partnership/Values	Give your feedback and ideas	Open	Students can comment other points and give their vision on how to update a module

There was the second part about additional elective modules for students who do not have a mandatory English module. Other students ignored it. This time questions were more yes/no oriented.

5.4. T-UNIVERSITY RESULTS

The number of student feedback reports were falling from feedback to feedback (Table 5). Backfire was an attempt to increase the number of reports.

Table 5

The number of student feedback reports

Date	What about	Number
17.10.21	Core courses	213
09.02.22	Core courses	137
22.03.22	First semester	92
26.04.22	Electives	115

The response from students was 29,2% (115/394). It was not enough information to form a full picture about the situation in the electives. This information gave a food for thought that can be summarised:

- 1) More time should be focused on student awareness. Feedback as the tool partially failed to work with most of the students. Additional work should be done outside the tool in the educational environment.
- 2) Six focus groups will be formed. The score of six electives is lower than average in the electives. More information from focus groups with students will help to make the plan of future actions.
- 3) All of the professors are ready to continue to work at T-university. Professors want to update and start their electives one more time for the new year students.
- 4) 81% (93/115) of reports show the student progress in knowledge and skills.
- 5) 17% (20/115) of students feel tired after elective courses. 10 of these students gave lower scores to the electives.
- 6) 61% (70/115) of students did write any qualitative feedback.

During this attempt the amount of information was not satisfactory. The goal was to achieve a 50% response rate. The lack of qualitative data does not help to form a full picture. Nonetheless, these results can be useful as experience.

5.5. INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The results do not show a significant increase in the number of student reports as presented at Table 5. It can be interpreted as the failure of the tool to work with the low awareness students. However, there are different results that should be discussed. Backfire has shown that feedback should not be separated from work with awareness. Attention to the issue of students as subjects as their own education should be prioritised. The subjectivity should be done before the feedback collection as a series of educational and personal activities.

The development of feedback literacy is a crucial point. At the T-university there was a whole module about writing literacy and language use. However, due to the Backfire results, they can be interpreted in two ways. First, most of the students are not motivated enough to send a report in the first place. It is supposed that it can be connected with the lack of understanding about the importance of feedback or the lack of results of previous polls. There were no documents, messages or meetings about the changes the feedback has provided to the T-university. It creates the situation when students do not have a dialogue but they talk with just another poll. Second, students do not know or do not have enough practice in reflection. To give qualitative data one should be aware of self-reflection. This analysis is tough to perform but effective action.

This is necessary to develop self-awareness of personal knowledge and skills, competencies, and identify possible ways of improvement [O'Grady, p. 16].

Students that are stated to be tired physically and mentally scored the lowest points. It can be connected with the fact that current conditions influence the vision of the educational environment. There is no information about what is

the first: condition of the student affected by actions beyond our control or the situation that occurred in the module. It is the work for future research, in which the connection should be find out. Right now there is not enough information to make statements but the proposition will be to pay extra attention to the student conditions during the educational modules.

5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The ideas that were put into Backfire stand for the ultimate purpose to achieve student partnership. It is crucial to understand for students the benefits of the feedback and future actions it creates in order to be more integrated. It is supposed more work should be done before the feedback.

Partnership includes a certain list of values and beliefs that are accepted in the educational environment. It is a common occurrence that there can be true and false values as the results of society's pressure. For that reason, they can be on a different level of personal awareness. It is hard to define universal values, some researchers think that it is about common ideas but there are still differences from one society to another [Fowers & Richardson, pp. 609-610; Scott, pp. 44-45].

Schwartz model [see appendix 2] is a one of the possible ways to find out if the students are even ready to be partners with the institution. If not, feedback can not change the thinking of the people and it makes it worthless. In that case, the work beyond collecting data should be prioritised.

DMTI test procedure

It was planned to work with students on the analysis of the data. This is also a part of forming future student partnerships. There should be an announcement for the participation of the student community and any person that is interested in it will get a chance for the interview.

In the interview the motivation level should be checked and results of the critical and analytical thinking tests [see appendix 1]. Preliminary it required four people for Backfire that brings us to a person for two modules for analysis. It is a

decent amount of work for the students. It is assumed it should require additional guidance.

Before the interview, the search for student volunteers should be done to pass the test. There are three qualities: maximisation, satisfaction, minimization. To pass the screening, the difference in total score maximisation and satisfaction should be more than 30% of minimization score.

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Max.} + \text{Sat.}}{\text{Min.}} = 1.3 >$$

Min.

The example of the analytical test is presented at the appendix 1.

In this version of Backfire the student analytical group was not formed due to the time limitations. In the next iteration of Backfire it is absolutely necessary.

Social networks or LMS

The Backfire should be easy to collect, analyse and perform. It can be adapted for the social networks of choice: VK, Facebook, Instagram etc. It could be beneficial to allow students to share their feedback in the form of audio and video messages as these formats are on every network. It gives students a freedom of choice on how it is possible to deliver the necessary information.

Social networks give a great reach to many people as it is also possible to include people outside the university but LMS gives full control. It can be adapted for the needs of the university easily as it has more control over it. LMS can be adjusted in a way that it would be easy to collect, analyse, give reports, help to the participants or implement changes right away. Nonetheless, not every institution has resources to start its own LMS and maintain it. Social networks are a cheaper version but with limitations.

The list of possible additional questions for the audio and video Backfire:

- 1) Where can you apply the new knowledge?
- 2) Were there negative or positive emotions (No need to describe them)? Analyse reasons for them.

- 3) What would you do in a different way and why?
- 4) What would you do the same and why?

The recommendations to the audio and video:

- 1) Make it simple. It should be easy to analyse or the report will be outdated to the time it is needed the most.
- 2) Make it short. 30 seconds is a reasonable frame. Students should be more consistent with what and how they deliver information.
- 3) Give an opportunity for it to be anonymous. The less people know about real names of students the better. It helps to exclude bias especially when in audio and video format it is hard to disguise a personality.
- 4) Make backups. There always should be a backup in case something goes wrong: no internet, no access to the social networks or online software, computer viruses, stealing intellectual property, etc.
- 5) Get voice recognition tools. It can transform audio into text. It saves a lot of time but it should be double checked as the technology is not perfect.

5.7. HOW TO WORK WITH LOW AWARENESS STUDENTS?

Reflective journal

The self-reflection process is the process when a student looks at his or her actions and critically analyses them to identify factors and elements that helped to gain some knowledge or skills. Reflective journal is a tool for documenting self-reflection. Journal gives opportunity for students to develop their own learning strategy and possible ways of development. The objective of reflective journals is to record ideas, strategies, struggles, opportunities, visions and decisions that students can come up with during the learning process [Chikhalsouk et al, p. 2]. Reflection journal also results in enhancing learning

outcomes and creates additional opportunities for students to reflect. It can be a ground for future institution changes.

It can be embodied with Problem Based Learning. Republic Polytechnic, Singapore, [O'Grady, pp. 3-16] does the PBL intensive course for all their students. PBL intensive consists of five days, each day students work with the new problem. The main purpose is to create a safe and friendly environment that induces prior knowledge, practice, problem-stating and solving skills, importance of continuous assessment and self-reflection. Students complete a reflection journal after every day of learning. It helps to reflect upon knowledge and skill obtained during the PBL work, build awareness of personal learning and develop strategies for improvement.

At the very beginning, the reflective journal can help T-university students to develop the basic feedback literacy. The self-reflection induces personal awareness of one's knowledge, skills and understanding of the environment around. It will be a first step in acknowledging a personal role in the own education and institution that gives opportunity to develop self. Student partnership is impossible without understanding the concept a person is in.

Project design sessions

There were project design sessions at T-university. The main topic was the student view on how it is possible to enhance the educational environment in sections such as electives, students' social life, LMS, and Navigation days for first-years. There were several principles. First, make students go through the whole process of project design. Students started with the global educational trends, continued with ideas of how their topics should look like, analysed the current situation and possible obstacles and plan of action. Second, the institution is highly interested in the results. All proposals were presented to the vice-rector of academic affairs. Vice-rector proposed to take some of the plans on the agenda. Third, students are active participants not passive receivers. All of the students, even those who were not participating in the PDS, were welcome to continue in

the implementation of the student projects. Fourth, students were motivated to reflect on their work at PDS. It is a crucial point as reflection is connected with awareness and learning. PDS is the first step to the student partnership. It is in the process of execution of several student propositions.

CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate the change in quality and number of feedback reports from low-awareness students when a feedback system pays attention to the core ideas of the institution. The hypothesis was that feedback based on the aspects of institutional values, competencies and student partnership would help in achieving the purpose. The preliminary research has shown that the number of student reports were decreasing from poll to poll. The Backfire was specifically designed to meet the needs of T-university and School X. The Backfire took the assumption that most of the students would not leave to the qualitative feedback. For that reason, the decision to create a focus group was adapted to collect the necessary information from the recipients. In this thesis, there was limited time to run focus groups.

A major finding of the study is the ineffectiveness of the feedback as a tool in terms when there is no feedback literacy developed. The Backfire was created with the respect to the values, competencies and readiness of the institution to collaborate with students. The decision to create a tool before the development of the necessary skills among students was reckless.

There should be a dialogue between students and the institution. This dialogue should include the general understanding of assessment and feedback processes rather than the particular works. It can be connected with the numbers of mid-module feedback, how to improve the feedback processes, new possibilities to give feedback for students, the involvement of the other participants of the educational process or challenges of using the feedback. This dialogue provides an opportunity to all participants to create a safe and effective educational environment which creates the ultimate partnership between all participants.

Contribution of the study is the better understanding of preparation. Additional work outside the feedback is required to develop a feedback literacy

among students. There is an obligatory writing and thinking module² for every student. Nonetheless, the low level of reports show that students do not recognize feedback as a powerful tool to change and update their personal learning. There were unscheduled face-to-face dialogues with 85 students. They have occurred at institution activities such as PDS or Open Doors Day, at the classrooms and outside. 50 students said it was a writing module but with no thinking as there was no feedback from the professors at the student performance. Students lack the material to self-reflect on. In the future iteration there should be a more thoughtful process of the writing and thinking module because it is the basis to the student feedback literacy and further partnership as it helps to create a dialogue.

² (RUS.) Письмо и мышление, средства языка и коммуникации

CONCLUSION

Ashford and Cummings (p.371) defined feedback as representation of resources that gives information to individuals about the performance and the progress in attaining goals. In this thesis, feedback is the tool to collect information about teaching and learning process, educational environment, maintenance processes and an opportunity to develop student partnership. Feedback is based on the three criteria. First, institutional values are presented in the questions. Awareness about student mental and physical health, possibilities to personal development are top priorities of T-university at the moment. Second, the current level of competencies obtained by students. Critical, analytical and creative thinking, communication skills, self-organisation and self-reflection, goal-setting and work with contexts are essential to ability to solve complex issues in a future context. Third, feedback should be a tool to develop student partnership. Students should be active contributors to their own learning and active participants in finding mutual solutions of educational, administrative and personal issues.

In this thesis, the assumption was made that students have a low self-awareness level and to work with it, the feedback system “Backfire” was created. The expected results were the increase in quantity and quality of student reports, analyse the results and development the plan of actions. The result was achieved partially. The quantity of reports stayed almost on the same level but qualitative results helped to form a plan of action. Deeper investigation is needed because the number of reports do not give a full picture. Interesting connection was found between the student's current mental state and the most low rated modules. 10 out of 16 low scores are given by students who are tired or exhausted. There is a lack of qualitative information, focus groups are required to build strong connections between these two aspects.

Additional work beforehand required. It is the institution's mission to develop student awareness about feedback. Feedback literacy is connected directly with the student partnership because it creates a dialogue between people and the system. The number of reports is connected with the student's understanding of the importance of that dialogue. The thinking and writing module of T-university should be redesigned to meet institutional values, student competencies and student partnership. It is a prosperous idea to update PDS in the curriculum. It can enhance student self-reflection skills, self-analysis, critical thinking and working with different contexts.

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LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1. STUDENT AS OBJECT OF LEARNING	10
FIGURE 2. EFFECTIVE SELF=POSITIONING BASED ON VALUES AND EFFECT ON PARTNERSHIP.....	19
FIGURE 3. REFLECTION AS LEARNING	20
FIGURE 4. RICE PROCESS.....	31
FIGURE 5. RICE FORMULA	31
FIGURE 6. THE FULL PROCEDURE OF ANALYSIS.....	34
FIGURE 7. HOW TO WORK WITH FOCUS GROUP	41
FIGURE 8. SPREADSHEET FOR MODERATOR	44
FIGURE 9. FIRST VERBAL QUESTION EXAMPLE	68
FIGURE 10. SECOND VERBAL QUESTION EXAMPLE	69
FIGURE 11. DIAGRAMMIC QUESTION EXAMPLE.....	69
FIGURE 12. NUMERICAL QUESTION EXAMPLE	70
FIGURE 13. ABSTRACT QUESTION EXAMPLE	70
FIGURE 14. SCHWARZ MODEL OF VALUES	72

Appendix 1

DMTI Test

Here are five example analytical questions to try out³. Answers for all five are below the tests.

Verbal Questions

Derivatives and other structured financial products are generally used for positive, risk-reduction purposes. For example, to secure the price of a commodity which is to be "bought" at a future date, but at a price that is set today. However, some academics and economic commentators view these as dangerous and irresponsible innovations in the world of international banking and global financial services.

Traders in these structured financial products are able to make large bets on the change in price of commodities or currencies and only need pay a small up-front deposit. Such traders can accumulate huge exposure to losses which could be devastating to their employers.

Sceptics believe that one day such products could lead to financial ruin for a bank if one or more derivatives traders chase their losses over an extended period of time. In summary, complex, structured financial products are a necessary evil to meet the demands of modern-day capitalist societies.

Figure 9. First verbal question example

Statement: A derivative could be used by an airline to secure the price of oil now, which it won't use until six months time.

³ Retrieved from <https://www.practiceaptitudetests.com/analytical-reasoning-tests/>

Public sector pensions are increasingly under threat as the Government's actuaries and external financial advisors struggle to establish how current levels of pension scheme obligations can be met. The problem has been caused by a global retraction in world stock indices where many billions of pounds were invested.

While pension fund assets have been falling in value, contributions paid into funds have also fallen as more people take early retirement. Longer life expectancy has also added to the strain. This combination of factors has led to a major deficit that has prompted the government to extend retirement ages and force public sector employees to contribute increasing amounts into their pension schemes. These changes have resulted in outrage amongst many public sector workers. Many private sector workers, however, believe that despite these reforms, public sector workers still benefit from more generous pensions. One radical proposal for alleviating the deficit is infrastructure investment, which some economists believe would stimulate economic growth.

Figure 10. Second verbal question example

Statement: More people taking early retirement is the major contributory factor to the public sector pension deficit.

Diagrammatic Question

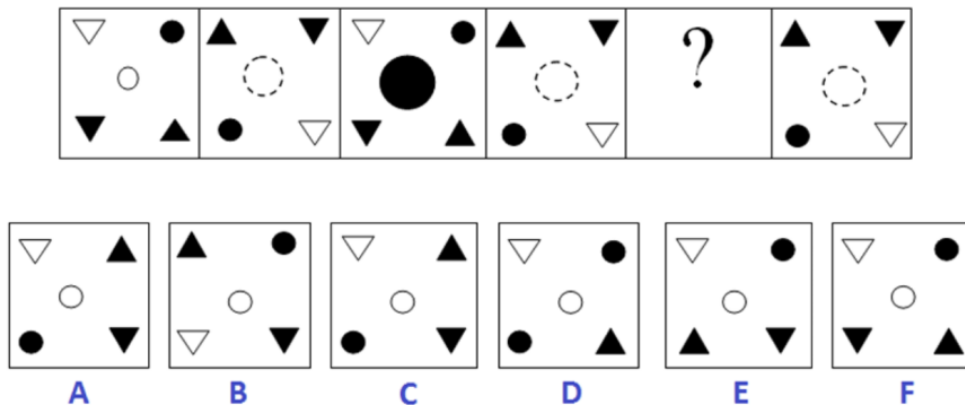


Figure 11. Diagrammatic question example

Which is the next logical image in the sequence?

Numerical Question

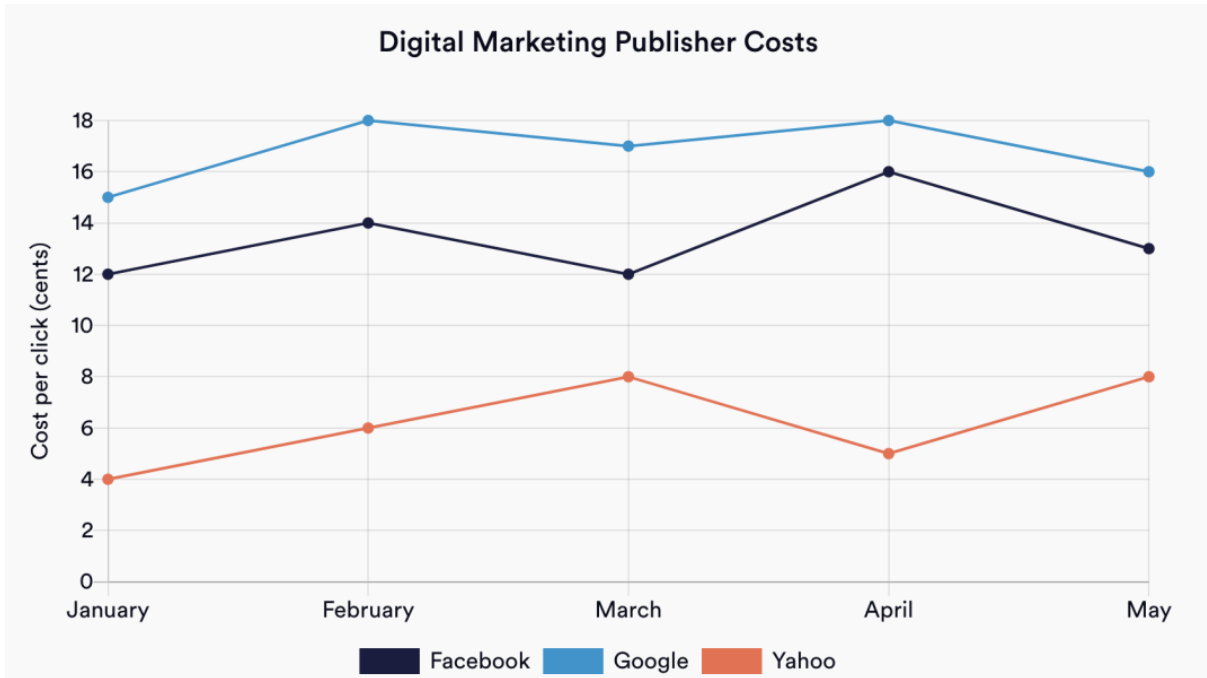


Figure 12. Numerical question example

What was the ratio of the cost of a Google click in April compared to the cost of a Facebook and Yahoo click in February?

Abstract Question

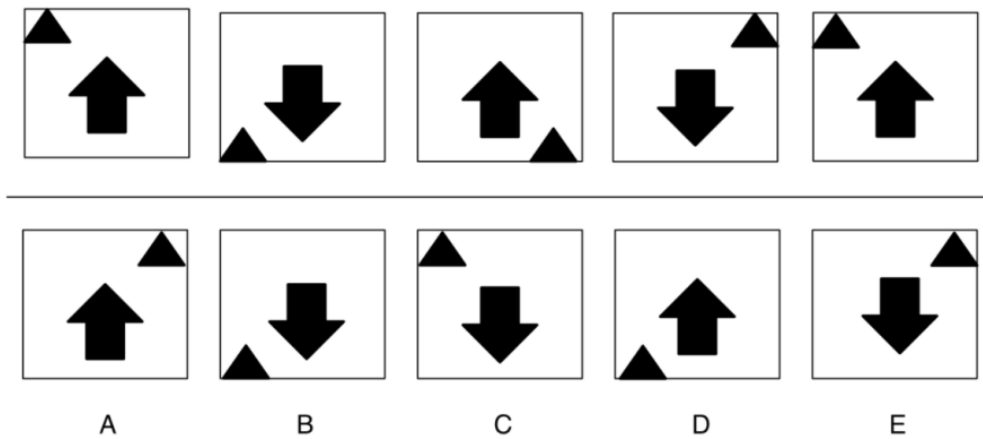


Figure 13. Abstract question example

Which of the boxes comes next in the sequence?

Answers

Verbal Question 1: True – “to secure the price of a commodity which is to be “bought” at a future date, but at a price that is set today.”

Verbal Question 2: Cannot tell – the passage refers to both this fact, extended life expectancy, and that the value of pension fund assets has fallen.

Diagrammatic Question: There is a central figure and four figures with one in each corner: (i) The central figure firstly increases in size over a series of three, then decreases in the same fashion; (ii) The central figure changes from white, to having a dotted outline, to black; and (iii) The four figures rotate around the four corners, moving two corners at a time. So the correct answer is F.

Numerical Question: Step 1. Extract the relevant figures from the graph Cost of per click in April. Google 18 cents : Facebook + Yahoo (14 + 6 = 20 cents). Step 2. Divide 20 by 18 to calculate the ratio. $20 \div 18 = 1.11$ Step 3. Present as a ratio 1 : 1.11

Abstract Question: Arrow changes direction from pointing up, to pointing down, with each turn. 2. Triangle moves from the top left corner in an anti-clockwise direction around the frame with each turn. So the answer is B.

Schwarz method

Schwarz model of values can be used to determine true and false values in the educational institution.

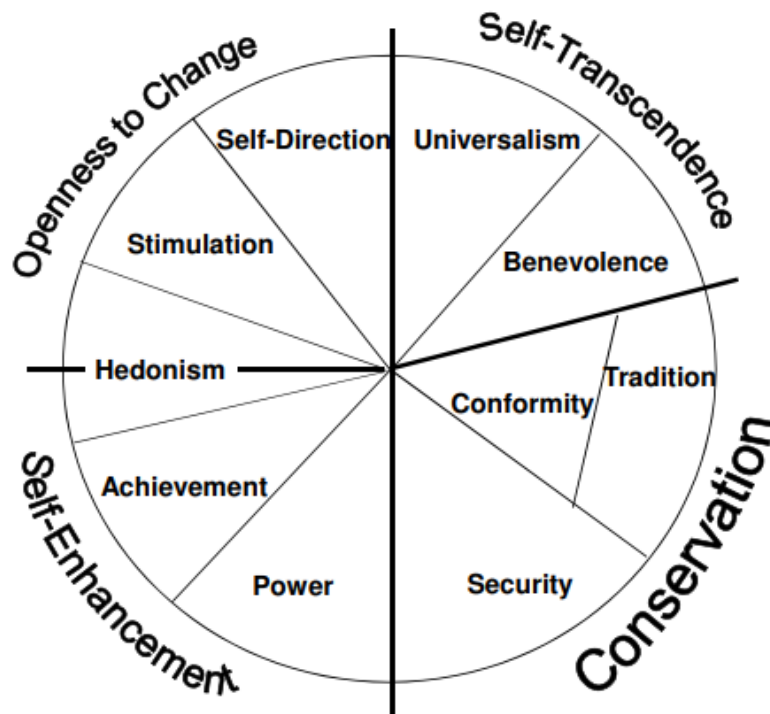


Figure 14. Schwarz model of values