Ph.D. Valentina Haxhiymeri (Xhafa)

University "Aleksander Xhuvani" Elbasan/ Albania E-mail:
valixhafa@yahoo.com

Effective Teaching Strategies that Induce Students to Adopt a Deep Approach to Learning in Higher Education

Abstract

The concept of approach to learning has been studied extensively because it is strongly related to students' level of understanding and learning outcomes. In general, three different approaches have been described: deep, surface and strategic/achieving. In this paper is discussed the concept of approach to learning and proper teaching strategies in higher education context that induce students to adopt a deep approach to learning. The aim of this paper is to argue that the approaches to learning cannot only be seen as mere student-dependent characteristics, but as one can be dependent on a number of factors as personal (e.g., student gender, age, prior experiences) and contextual (e.g., teaching/ learning activities/methods, perceived workload, assessment procedures, institutional values),(Biggs, 1987; Zeegers, 2001). In the light of this discussion, some of theories of university teachers` approaches to teaching are described and some of effective teaching strategies are suggested in address to higher education teachers.

Considering approaches to learning and teaching as issues of real concern for higher education institutions today, this paper seek to bring a modest contribute not only to quality of debate which surround this area, but also to get hold of opportunity for some reflection on current practice of higher education.

Keywords: *Approach to learning, factors influencing student`s approach to learning, theories of teachers` approaches to teaching, good teaching in university, teaching strategies in higher education.*

1-Introduction

In recent years, higher education in Albania, as many other countries in the world, has rapidly changed from an *"elite" academic system* to a *"mass" education one*. The work market has shifted towards higher-skill jobs, making higher education a routine aspiration for the young people. European Union already has a quantitative goal that 40 % of its young people should achieve higher education qualifications by 2020 (Gibbs, G & Habeshaw, T., 2013). This means not only the increasingly participation rates, but also student populations that become educationally more diversified. Certainly, the brightest and most committed students are going to university, as they have done in the past, but so do proportionately more students of rather different academic bent (Biggs, J. & Tang, C., 2011). Inevitably, big enrolment increases imply taking applicants who are academically under-prepared by the standards of past "elite" university education. Most of them have a limited view of what higher education is like before they begin it. They may be unaware of the demands of a university education in terms of workload, independent learning and access to resources (Lowe and Cook, 2003). As a result, many students admitted with relatively low school results, hardly complete their degrees. Many of those who do graduate probably don't learn as much as they could (Norton, A., Sonnemann, J., & Cherastidtham, I., 2013). While there are teachers which believe that these students should not be at university at all (Biggs, J.,1999).

A greater variety of types of students poses additional challenges for universities and their staff. At the same time it calls up maintaining standards and quality of teaching and enhancing all students` learning process. Further, it is often seen that resource limitations in higher education sector have limited large-class teaching to "*passive*" methods such as mass lecturing (Biggs, J., 1999). The lecture is considered as making *an efficient use of the lecturer`s time*, since it allow teaching to take place in classes with a *very high student/staff ratio*. In this situation lecturing to large groups of students seemingly is utility solution for many higher education institutions (Haxhiymeri, V., 2014). Even, this component of pedagogic system in higher education is likely to become an increasingly compelling incentive in

an era of declining resources (Sloman, J., Mitchell, C., & Davies, P., 2002). But, the question is raised as long as academics are holding traditional transmission theories of teaching which are seen by research that reinforce students` surface learning instead of the higher cognitive level processes. Typically, the lecturer may present information throughout the semester. At the end of the semester a test is given, the main function of which is to distinguish the good students from the poor learners. This might seem reasonable at the first sight. In fact, the primary job of university teachers/lecturers is not to discriminate educationally between students as good or poor one, but to create a learning environment that supports the learning activities appropriate to achieving the desired learning outcomes (Biggs, J., 2003). It is expected that teachers teach content according to students` needs of their classes and to help them succeed.

The need for good teaching in universities has never been greater than now (Norton, A., at al., 2013). However, the strategic approach to teaching has to be predicated on an understanding of how students learn.

There are many factors involved both in effective student learning, and in success or failure. But, in this paper, the main focus is on students' approaches to learning and teachers` approaches to teaching which influence positively on learning outcomes.

An approach to learning is a concept about students' motivation on learning and the use of appropriate strategies by students (Zhang, L. & Stenberg, R.J., 2000). It describes the nature of the relationship between the student, context, and task (Biggs, J. B., Kember, D., & Leung, D. Y. P., 2001). Basically, two approaches to learning have been firstly identified by Marton & Saljo (1976): the "*surface*" approach and the "*deep*" approach. Typically there is one other, which is referred to either as a *"strategic"* (Ramsden, 1981) or as an "*achieving*" approach (Biggs, 1987). Beside three main approaches, another less consistently defined factor has been found, originally called "*non-academic orientation*", but better described as *study pathologies* (Entwistle, 1991).

It is generally believed that the use of a deep learning approach is associated with higher quality of learning outcomes and a surface approach with lower quality of learning outcomes (Gijbels, D., Dochy, F., Van den Bossche, P., & Segers, M., 2005). Therefore, it is considered important that students be encouraged to adopt a deep approach. According to Felder and Brent (2005), the goal of instruction should be to induce the students to adopt a deep approach to the subjects that are important for their professional or personal development (Eksi, H., 2008).

Practically, the students can take different approaches to learning. These approaches are not stable traits in individuals, although some students will tend towards taking a deep approach while others will tend towards taking a surface approach (Biggs, J., 1999). People often believe that an approach to learning is fixed characteristic of a student and there are "*deep*" students and "*surface*" students. But student learning research has showed that students' approaches to learning *can vary according to students' perceptions* of their learning environment. A student who takes a deep approach to one subject, or even part of a subject, he or she may take a surface approach in relation to something else. Thus good teaching can influence students to take a deep approach, while a poor teaching in the widest sense can pressure students to take a surface approach. Biggs (1999; 2003; 2007) has defined *good teaching as the encouragement of a deep approach* to learning.

It is good news that students` approaches to learning might to be affected from quality of teachers` approaches to teaching. Rather, research literature suggests that *teachers can promote deep approaches to learning* through the creation of learning environments that students perceive as safe, supportive, and offering helpful relationships. Teachers can also present opportunities for exploration, inquiry, and experimentation by providing problems to be solved (Dart, B., Burnett, P., Purdie, N., Boulton-Lewis, G., Campbell, J. & Smith, D., 2000).

2-Methodology

The aim of this paper is to argue that the approaches to learning cannot only be seen as mere student-dependent characteristics, but as one can be dependent on a number of factors as personal (e.g., student gender, age, prior experiences) and contextual also (e.g., teaching/ learning activities/methods, perceived workload, assessment procedures, institutional values) (Biggs, 1987); Zeegers, 2001). In the light of this discussion, some of effective teaching strategies are suggested in address to higher education teachers/lecturers.

The study *methodology* includes a comprehensive review of recent research literature about the concept of approach to learning, the factors which are seen that influence students` approaches to learning, and contexts for effective teaching and learning outcomes in higher education.

This paper *considers* the following points:

1. *Approaches to learning*
2. *Factors influencing student`s approach to learning in the teaching context*
3. *Theories of teachers` approaches to teaching in higher education*
4. *Effective teaching strategies that induce students to adopt a deep approach to learning*

Considering approaches to learning and teaching as *issues of real concern for higher education* institutions today, this paper seek to bring a *modest contribute* not only to quality of debate which surround this area, but also to get hold of opportunity for some reflection on current practice.

The research findings reviewed in this paper can be very *useful for improving university teaching and learning*.

Moreover, a comprehensive review of recent research literature *can help teachers gain awareness*. The distinction between deep ap-

proaches and surface approaches to learning is particularly useful for lecturers who want to understand their students' learning and create learning environments which encourage students to achieve desired learning outcomes.

3-Effective Teaching Strategies That Indices Student to Adopt A Deep Approach To Learning In Higher Education

3.1 Approaches to learning

Over the past decades, a large amount of research has been conducted on students` learning in higher education. It is unfortunate, but true, that some academics teach students without having much formal knowledge of how students learn (Fry, H., Ketteridge, S., Marshall, S., 2009).

Learning is about how we perceive and understand the world, about making meaning (Marton & Booth, 1997). But, 'learning' is not a single thing. It may involve mastering abstract principles, understanding proofs, remembering factual information, acquiring methods, techniques and approaches, recognition, reasoning, debating ideas, or developing behavior appropriate to specific situations. It is about change (Fry, H., at al., 2009).

There are two main theories of learning within the student learning paradigm: phenomenography and constructivism. The theory of phenomenography seeks to understand learning by examining the variation in learners' qualitative experiences of learning. Phenomenographic theory (Ference Marton coined the term "phenomenography" in 1981 based on earlier Swedish research studies (Alsop & Tompsett, 2006). uses the empirical methods of study of the different ways in which people think of the world. In other words, its aim is to discover the qualitatively different ways in which people experience, conceptualize, realize and understand various aspects of phenomena in the world around them (Martin et al., 1992). An underlying

principle of this theory is that *people`s understandings affect their behaviors*, thus a person`s *conception of learning would affect his or her approach to learning*. Phenomenographic research has classified different conceptions of learning in a hierarchical system, as following: 1) Increasing knowledge, 2) Memorizing and reproducing, 3) Acquiring facts and skills that can be applied, 4) Understanding, 5) Interpreting reality in a new way. Three of first conceptions emphasize the external aspects of learning or something that is done to learner. Conceptions 4 and 5 emphasize the internal aspects of learning, so the *learning involves changing the way that learner relates to the world*.

Phenomenography's influence is largely as a research approach in higher education, where it has successfully demonstrated that the variations in learners' approaches to learning can be linked to certain types of learning outcomes (Thayer, M., 2007).

Meantime, theory of constructivism has a long history in cognitive psychology, Jean Piaget being a crucial figure, and today it takes on several forms: individual, social, cognitive or postmodern (Steffe & Gale, 1995). According to constructivist theory the process of "*making meaning*" is essential to learning. This theory argues that learning involves the construction of knowledge and learners must actively seek to make meaning from their experiences (Ditcher K. A., 2001). In this case meaning is not imposed or transmitted by direct instruction, but is created by the student`s learning activities, well summarized in the term "approach to learning".

Thus, learning is a way of interacting with the world. As students learn, their conceptions of phenomena change, and they see the world differently. The acquisition of information in itself does not bring about such a change, but the way students structure that information and think with it, does a change. Thus, *education is about conceptual change*, not just the acquisition of information (Biggs, J., 1999).

The constructivist learning theory has acted as a source for the development of *student-centred approaches to teaching* which is described by as "ways of thinking about teaching and learning that

emphasise student responsibility and activity in learning rather than content or what the teachers are doing" (Cannon & Newble, 2000). Research has shown that students` conceptions of learning are important factors in determining learning outcomes, but they are not the only factor (Ramsden, P., 1992). Another factor is *the approach that students take to learning* of a particular task.

There are two interpretations of "approaches to learning". The first interpretation refers to the process adopted prior to the outcome of learning, as originally is proposed by Marton and Saljo (1976) which based on their studies of tertiary students have identified the surface and deep approaches. The other interpretation refers to pre-dispositions to adopt particular processes, which meant *how students usually go about learning* (Biggs, J., 1987). The research literature describes the *deep, surface* and *achieving* approaches to learning, as following.

Students who use *a deep approach* are personally involved in the task and look at the significance of what they are being taught and attempt to make sense of it, connecting information and thinking into the topic. In addition they aim to understand relationships between the immediate task and other tasks or contexts and attempt to process information in a holistic way. Such students develop their own interpretation of the content by integrating it with their existing knowledge. They are likely to read extensively around a given topic, to discuss the topic and ultimately to achieve higher grades on assessment tasks. To the extent that such a student is an independent learner who is in control of his/her own learning. Deep learning develops critical analysis and encourages long term retention of concepts. Research has showed that deep learning is valued and fostered by educators.

On the other hand, a *surface approach* to learning arises when the student see learning as a means to achieve an end. This may be simply to do enough work to pass some assessment hurdle. Surface learning is focused on "what do I need to do to pass?". There is an emphasis upon memorizing individual details or pieces of information in a way to signify enough comprehension to complete the assignment. Students who adopt this approach are motivated by an

extrinsic objective and they will commit unrelated facts to their short term memory but are unlikely to be able to establish meaning or relationships between or within given tasks. Learning may be more superficial and not promote understanding. This approach is likely to be fostered by teachers who hold simple theories. The student is dependent on the teacher for knowledge and is unlikely to achieve highly on assessment tasks.

The students who use *achieving approach* to learning are motivated extrinsically and create a highly organized, productive, study skills approach to their learning. These students work to achieve grades which fit in with their egos or career aspirations. They have studied the game carefully and adjust their learning according to the rules as they perceive them. Strategic learning can involve a combination of both deep and surface learning strategies depending on the tasks at hand. There are times in a student's life when it may serve them to be a strategic learner, for example, when they have large chunks of information to learn or when they are time-poor. Strategic/achieving learning when closely allied with deep approaches to learning can deliver both success and good understanding of a subject (Atherton, J., 2009).

Meanwhile, the *rote learning* or *memorization* which is often associated with surface learning approach can be part of either a deep approach or a surface approach or an achieving approach, depending on the intention.

Although it is often considered a negative strategy, rote learning or memorization, in many disciplines is key one to applying understanding of or using a concept. As such intelligent use of rote learning or memorization can be a stepping stone to deep learning.

To the students adopting a deep approach, different *forms of memorization are a means* to an important end to create understanding. They are aware of the need to remember significant facts, principles, claims, arguments etc. and the process of making knowledge one's own rests in part on being able to remember important information. It also implies being able to make sense and make meaning from that

information. On the other hand, students adopting surface approach treats academic texts, lectures, lecture notes and so on, as a mass of data that has to be memorized for recall and reproduction. However, they are not working for understanding the materials.

In its original conception, Biggs (1987) identified student approaches to learning as *composite of motivational states* and *strategy* deployment that is relatively consistent over situations. So, an approach to learning has two components - *how* students approach a task (*strategy*) depends on *why* they want to approach it in the first place (*motive*). Each approach to learning has a corresponding motive and strategy.

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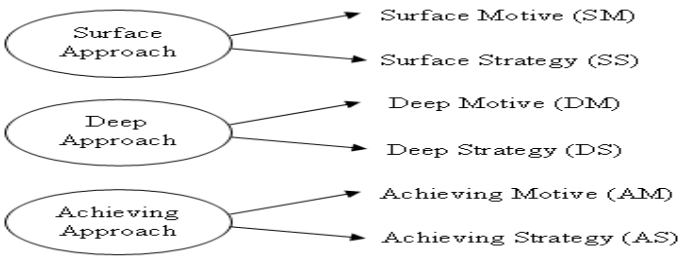


Fig.1. *Biggs' conception of a 6-factor structure in students' approaches to learning.*

Students approach their learning in different ways, operating in response to a series of motivations, internal and external to themselves. In the *Table 1* is presented a summary of motives and strategies corresponding each approach to learning that students are taking.

Table 1. Motives and strategies corresponding each approach to learning

Deep approach	Surface approach	Achieving approach
• When students are taking a deep approach they: • develop understanding and make sense of what they're learning; • create meaning and make ideas their own;	• When students are taking a surface approach they: • aim to reproduce information to meet external (assessment) demands; • may aim to meet requirements minimally, and appear to be focused on passing the assessment instead of (rather than as well as) learning;	• When students adopt an achieving approach they: • enhance their ego and self-esteem through competition; • obtain high grades and other rewards;
• In their learning strategies they: • focus on the meaning of what they're learning; • try to develop their own understanding; • relate ideas together and make connections with previous experiences; • ask themselves questions about what they're learning, discuss their ideas with others and enjoy comparing different perspectives; • are likely to explore the subject beyond the immediate requirements; • are likely to have positive emotions about learning;	• In their learning strategies they: • focus on pieces of information in an atomistic way, rather than making connections between them and seeing the structure of what is being learned; • limit their study to the bare essentials; • may rote learn information for the purpose of reproducing it; • are likely to have negative emotions about learning;	• In their learning strategies they: • identify the assessment criteria and estimate the learning effort required to achieve a particular grade; • follow up all suggested readings and/or exercises; • schedule their time and organise their working space, • behave as a model student; • operate strategically in their selection of peers;

While individual differences between students in approaches to learning and studying may remain relatively stable over time and course, the balance between deep and surface for the whole class can be altered by, for example, the assessment procedure (Thomas, 1986). Students may use deep or surface strategies, or *a combination of both throughout their studies*. Hall et al (2002) has suggested that *students` approaches to learning differ across different subjects within the same course*, demonstrating lower deep and higher surface approaches in accounting compared to normal level (Entwistle, N. J., 1991).

The question "*what influences the approaches to learning that a student adopts?"* has been in the center of research over the last ten years.

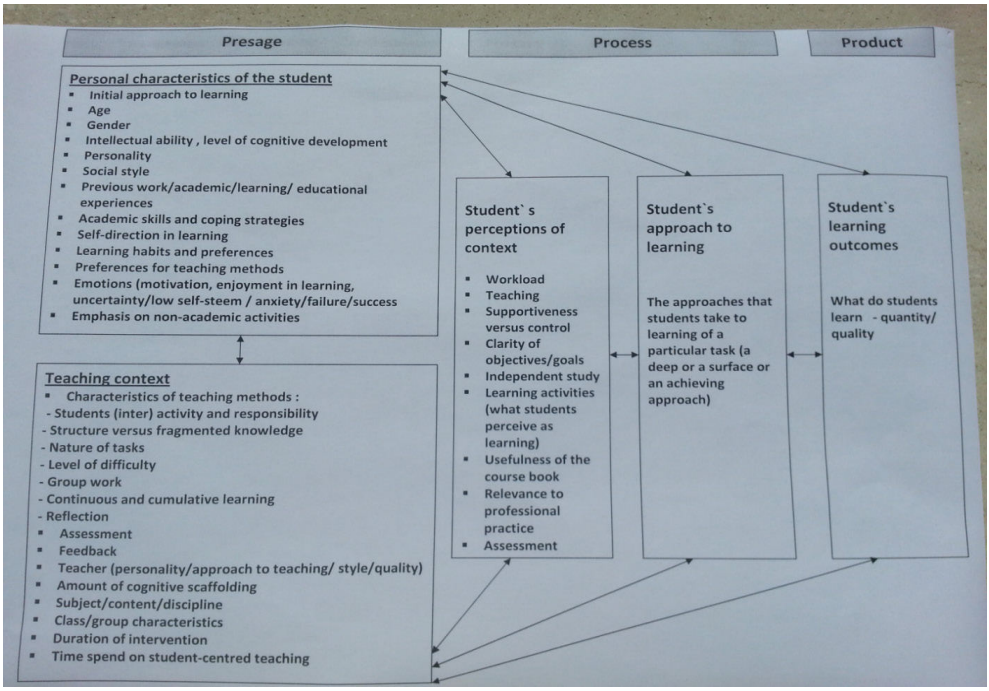
3.2-Factors influencing the students` approaches to learning in the teaching context

There are evidences described in research literature which indicate that the approaches to learning can be dependent on a number of factors as *personal* and *contextual* also (Biggs, J. 1987; Zeegers, P., 2001). But, some researchers have explored the relationship between approaches to learning and other variables in the teaching and learning context. The aim was to find out the situational factors *which can encourage or discourage students` deep approaches to learning in the teaching context*.

Biggs (1993) proposed a framework for understanding student learning through the consideration of the relationship between what teachers and students do and think and the nature of student learning outcomes (Dart et al., 2000). These results in a model are commonly referred to as the *3P model*. This model relates the main components in a classroom learning in terms of the three P's: Presage (students' characteristics and teaching context), Process (task processing), and Product (nature of outcome). It helps to apprehend the approaches to learning and their position in the context of the learning environ-

ment.

The content of the 3P Model of Student Learning presented in Figure 2 below is adapted considering some of explicit data which are found in recent researches in this field, such as the *students` perceptions related to teaching context* (Source: Biggs, 1993; Biggs, Kember, & Leung, 2001); Marlies Baeten; Eva Kyndt; Katrien Struyven; Filip Dochy , 2010 and Lew Tek-Yew, 2011). These findings would be helpful to perceive *how the students develop or choose the respective*



In the 3P model, all factors (presage, process, product factors) are interlinked reciprocally. Thus, student factors, teaching context, on-task approaches to learning, and the learning outcomes mutually interact, forming a dynamic system (Biggs et al., 2001). The *presage factors* include both student characteristics and the aspects of the teaching context. The student presage factors are relatively stable learning-related characteristics that include the conceptions of learning, prior knowledge, motivation, work habits, locus of control, perceived self-efficacy, learning style, and social and cultural factors. The teaching presage factors include the conceptions of learning and

teaching, teaching style and methods, curriculum organization, task difficulty, assessment procedures, time available, resource materials, the classroom climate, and etc. the *process factors* are the result of the interaction between student and teaching presage factors and refer to the way students perceive teaching context and how handle the learning task by adopting a deep, surface, or achieving approach to learning. The *product factors* are the outcomes of learning and are determined mainly by the approaches to student learning.

An approach to learning adopted by students is determined by lots of variables such the characteristics of students, learning context, and learning outcomes (Eksi, H., 2008).

It is important to say that besides fairly general influences on approach, other ways in which the *learning context influences approach are more indirect, as the effects are mediated by the characteristics of the individual student*. For example, students who are consistently relying on a surface approach actively prefer, and rate more highly, lecturers who provide pre-digested information ready for "*learning*", while students with a deep approach prefer lecturers who challenge and stimulate (Entwistle and Tain, 1990). Thus, it is *students` perceptions of the learning environment/teaching context that influence how a student would approach to learning, not necessarily the context itself* (Entwistle, N. J., 1987).

The students' perceptions of the course, the teaching approach and the assessment instruments, the cognitive development and prior experiences of the student and the institutional framework and academic environment in which the teaching takes place (Bowden (1988) cited in Sheppard and Gilbert (1991)), will all be reflected in learning outcomes. The tasks students are asked to carry out, such as background reading, text reading, oral or written class presentations and assignment work are part of the context in which the student is learning and student perceptions of these tasks and the assessment instruments will have a significant impact on the quality of their learning (Johnston, C., 1993).

However, it indicates how the *whole teaching - learning system* affects the quality of student learning and how it supports students to develop deep approach to learning. Changing one component - like study skills - can have little effect, if teaching and assessment remains unchanged. Thus, current research is investigating in what *specific ways aspects of the learning environment affect approaches to learning* and the quality of the learning outcomes achieved by students. According to Entwistle (1991) there is a series of studies indicate how *the origin of the study strategies adopted* by students in higher education can be located in *the continual teaching practices* in the schools. Course and assessment design and teaching methods all play an important role in fostering deep, surface and achieving / strategic learning.

As is made clear in Figure 2, factors influencing the students` approaches to learning are situated in the teaching context and students' perceptions of that teaching context, but also in characteristics of the students themselves.

Biggs (1989) asserts that teachers can influence the outcomes or 'Products' of learning in three ways: additively, interactively, and contextually. It is the interactive (participatory) mode of teaching that can minimise surface level learning. What the student brings to the process of learning (the presage factors) is difficult to change whereas the factors within the teaching context such as content, method and structure are easier to modify.

3.3-Theories of teachers` approach to teaching in higher education

All teachers bring to the classroom or lecture theatre an inbuilt informal theory of teaching. This theory, which may be either consciously stated or implicit in what the teachers do, has implications for the way in which students learn (Johnston, C., 1993).

Research literature has adduced *four basic theories* underlying the approaches to teaching in university (Fox, D., 1983; Johnston, C., 1993). The first is *the transfer theory*, which views the subject mat-

ter as a commodity that can transfer into an empty vessel waiting to receive it, in this case the "*empty vessel*" presupposes the student's mind. This theory justifies the university teachers and reasons that it is the students' fault if they do not learn. Where teaching materials are well prepared, effectively organised, and imparted, teachers are considered to have done all they can.

A second theory relates to the *'shaping' of the students mind* into some predetermined form. Here there is a simple relationship between teaching and learning. If a topic has been taught it must therefore have been learnt. This theory explains that the teacher is not only in control of the commodity to be transferred but also determines the shape of the finished product.

The third type of theory is *'developed' theory.* The teacher's role according to this theory is to act as a knowledgeable and experienced guide and fellow explorer in the journey of education. Here a range of perspectives are explored, there is no 'right' body of knowledge to be learnt and the expectation is that the teacher will learn along with the students.

The final type identified by Fox, D. (1983) is *the growing theory* which accentuates the sense that students make a significant contribution to their own learning in terms of its pace, direction, objectives and process. The growing theory takes into account the past experiences, learning and knowledge of the student. It is flexible in its outcomes both in terms of the overall direction and the extent or level of that outcome. In travelling and growing theories the teacher's roles seem that have changed from being an infallible expert, responsible for a final product, to being a guide who is responsive to the context in which the learning is occurring.

According to Prosser and Trigwell (1998) these different theories of teaching in higher education seem to follow *growth of teacher competence*. It is likely that university teachers hold them at different points in their teaching career. Referring to Biggs (1999) these teachers` approach to teaching are based on a hierarchical or developmental system of levels of teacher`s competences. There are different levels of

teachers` approaches to teaching from the lowest level to the higher.

Level 1. Focus: What the student is?

At this level, *the teachers focus on student differences*. They are struck with the fact that there are the good students and the poor students. Their responsibility as teachers is to know the content well and to expound it clearly. Thereafter, it`s up to the student to attend lectures, to listen carefully, to take notes, to read the recommended readings, and to make sure it`s taken on board and unloaded on cue. The purpose of teaching at this level is to transmit information, usually by lecturing. Basically, this conception holds teaching constant, so that variability in student learning is accounted for by individual differences between students, which makes this *a blame-the-student- theory of teaching*. When students don`t learn, it is due to a deficit: ability, attitude, study skills, motivation, and so on. It is not considered that the teaching might have been the problem.

Level 2. Focus: What the teacher does?

The focus of teaching at this level is more clearly on what the teacher does. It is still conceived as a transmission process, but of concepts and understandings, not just of information. The teacher who operates at Level 2 works at obtaining an armoury of teaching skills. Traditional approaches to staff development often worked on what the teacher does, as do “how to” courses, and the books that provide prescriptive tips on getting it across more effectively:

- *Establish clear procedural rules at outset, such as signal for silence;*
- *Ensure clarity: project the voice, clear visual aids;*
- *Eye-contact students while talking;*
- *Don`t interrupt a large lecture with handouts: chaos is likely;*

The teacher is concerned with management, not with facilitating learning. Good management is important for setting the stage for

good learning to take place – not as an end in itself. Level 2 is also *a deficit model*, the "*blame*" this time *on the teacher*. It is a view of teaching often held by administrators because it provides a convenient rationale for making personal decisions. *Teaching is seen as a bag of competencies* – the more competencies you have, the better a teacher you are.

Level 3. Focus: What the student does?

The focus of teaching at Level 3 is on whether student activities leading to appropriate learning are being supported. Expert teaching certainly includes mastery of a variety of teaching techniques, but unless learning takes place, they have not achieved their purpose. The Level 3 teacher focuses on what the student does, on what learning is or is not going on.

Ramsden (2003) has argued that there is a chain of connections between learning and teaching in higher education. Each component of good teaching helps to bring about the kind of learning that leads to changes in understanding. A skilled lecturer must deploy complex theories of teaching suitable for different context relevant to the teaching and learning of that subject. Conceptions of Ramsden (2003) for university teachers` theoretical approaches to teaching are summarized in *Table 2* which is presented below:

Table 2. Towards a model of university teaching **(**Source: Adapted from Ramsden, 2003)

	Theory 1	**Theory 2**	**Theory 3**
Focus	Teacher & content	Teaching techniques that will result in learning	Relations between students and subject matter
Strategy	Transmit information	Manage teaching process; transmit concepts	Engage; challenge; imagine oneself as the student
Actions	Mainly presentation	Active learning as organising activity	Systematically adapt to suit student understanding
Reflections	Unreflective; taken for granted	Apply skills to improve teaching	Teaching as a research-like scholarly process

Thus, teaching in higher education trends to be *a challenging experience* for all university teachers, in particular for the new teachers. To ensure the teaching quality they need to know *what pedagogical approaches to use during their teaching*, e.g. during a lecture in large group, where to pitch the lecture, how to keep all students interested and which ways to employ to get students engaged, in order to create a teaching context which would encourage students to adopt the deep approaches to learning.

Indeed, the *adopting quality approach to teaching* into the daily routine of teaching/lecturing to large university classes is not an easy thing to done and not all professors can be expected to embrace it. Research has detected some of *potential obstacles or barriers* which interfere with this process. However, each type of risk can be successfully over-come if *academics as university teacher* develop *a better understanding* of teaching and learning issues in higher education as well as to advance their *pedagogic competences* (Haxhiymeri, Xh.V., 2014).

In the absence of educational development, teachers in higher education tend to base their teaching on their own experience as students. In this way, old teaching methods that focus on the teacher` rather than on the students` needs and on the subject matter rather than on the transformation of student knowledge perpetuate from generation to generation (European Science Foundation (ESF) (November, 2012). Generally, many countries in world, including Albania also, have perceived earlier the need for professional training of teachers at preschool, primary/elementary, secondary and high school level, whilst it seems to be a too common assumption that such professional training is not necessary for teacher at university. According to European Science Foundation (ESF, 2012), teaching in higher education is still viewed as an activity that anyone can do. In many countries, academics are prepared for their role as research, but not for their teaching duties.

However, recent changes in higher education sector and increasingly request for the quality education make the *development of academics` teaching skills a priority.*

3.4-Teaching strategies that induce students to adopt a deep approach to learning

As it said above, the student learning research has showed that *students' approaches can vary according to students' perceptions of their learning environment*. Foreknowing the approaches that students are taking and the reasons why they are taking these approaches it can be a helpful way of informing changes to teaching and subjects in higher education. There are some common reasons why students might be taking a surface approach to learning (Biggs 1999; Prosser & Trigwell 1999; Ramsden 1992), such as:

- Assessment rewards students for taking a surface approach – e.g. exams can be passed through the rote learning of facts or lists of information;
- Students don't receive adequate feedback on their progress;
- The subject is taught in a way which doesn't make clear its overall structure or the connections between topics, so it's harder for students to make these connections;
- The subject doesn't take students' prior knowledge into account, so students are not able to engage meaningfully;
- The subject contains too much content for the time available - lots of topics are covered but there is little time to engage with new material more deeply;
- Teaching is teacher-focused and emphasises transmission of information;
- Teaching encourages cynicism, anxiety or other negative feelings about the subject;
- Students don't see any intrinsic value in learning the subject and teaching doesn't help them to see the value;

- Students have been successful by using surface approaches in the past;

- Students have multiple other commitments and are trying to do the minimum necessary to pass the subject.

But, the teachers can influence these factors to varying degrees providing *effective teaching strategies*. The research in field has attested that there is a direct link between design subjects and courses, learning objectives and choice of teaching methods, particularly the assessment, and the way how students approach learning in a subject. In this framework it is suggested that:

- The teaching which involves students in *active and independent learning* is more likely to encourage a deep approach to learning in the subject.

- Higher order objectives are more likely to encourage students to take a deep approach to learning in the subject. Assessment tasks should mirror and reward these objectives, not merely reward recall.

- When students' workload is perceived by them to be heavy, they will often attempt to cope by adopting a surface approach to learning. However, in this regard new questions may arise. For instance, how many possibilities for independent studying should be provided or which amount of workload is appropriate in order to increase deep learning (Felder, R., 2005).

- Students will be more likely to adopt a deep approach to learning in the subject if there is some element of choice available to them. Where this is impossible, or where a service subject is being taught, care should be taken to explain to students as thoroughly as possible why this is the case and what the relevance is of the material or of the subject (Lublin, J., 2003).

There may well be personal limits to what students can do that are

beyond any teacher`s control, but there are learning-related aspects that are controllable. Capitalising on them is what good teaching is about. Good teaching is getting *most students to use the higher cognitive level processes* that the more academic students use spontaneously. *Good teaching narrows the gap* (Lublin, J., 2003)

Lastly, there is a summary of *effective teaching strategies* that university teachers need to apply in their classes. They can induce students *to adopt deep approach to learning*, by:

- designing assessment which rewards students for understanding, making connections, etc.;
- encouraging active engagement with learning tasks, e.g. students are engaged in inquiry or creative production, explore complex issues, problems or case studies of practice;
- bringing out the structure of the subject explicitly and encouraging students to make connections with (or challenge) what they already know;
- giving students opportunities to discuss, debate and compare their understandings with each other and with the teaching staff;
- giving students opportunities to gain qualitative feedback, especially but not only on their assessed work, rather than just giving marks or grades;
- giving students reasonable opportunities to make reasonable choices about what and how they will learn;
- aligning learning objectives, teaching and learning approaches and assessment to assist students to achieve the learning goals;
- helping students to perceive clear goals and standards for learning;

- designing the subject in a way which matches students' prior knowledge and learning skills and helps students to develop further;

- using student-focused teaching approaches which emphasize changes in student understanding, and help students to become aware of critical differences between their prior understandings about the subject matter and new understandings or ideas which the subject is seeking to develop;

- teaching in ways which encourage students' intrinsic interest - showing their own enthusiasm;

4- Conclusion

The need for good teaching in universities has never been greater than now (Norton, A., at al., 2013). However, the strategic approaches to teaching need to be predicated on an understanding of how students learn.

The purpose of this paper was focused to review what the higher education research literature tells us about nature of student learning, and the relationship between personal and contextual factors which influence on learning outcomes. In addition, it was useful to know what current literature discuss about certain aspects of teaching and learning that lie within this sphere of influence, over which teachers can to have control and so, they can make due changes in context of learning environments in order to encourage students to adopt a deep approach to learning.

The research has identified three approaches to learning: *a deep, a surface and an achieving or strategic approach*. It is widely accepted that a deep approach will contribute positively to learning outcomes (Zeegers, P., 2001). Therefore, it is considered important that students

be encouraged to adopt a deep approach.

An approach to learning adopted by student is determined by *lots of factors*, such as the personal characteristics of students, learning environment and learning outcomes. But research in field has showed that students' approaches to learning can vary according to *students' perceptions of teaching context as well*.

There is a direct link between design subjects and courses, learning objectives and choice of teaching methods, particularly the assessment, and the way how students approach learning in a subject. Thus, *good teaching can influence students* to take a deep approach, while a poor teaching in the widest sense can pressure students to take a surface approach.

According to Biggs (1999) good teaching is getting *most students to use the higher cognitive level processes* that the more academic students use spontaneously. *Good teaching narrows the gap*.

Considering approaches to *learning and teaching as issues of real concern* for higher education institutions today, this paper seek to bring a *modest contribute* not only to quality of debate which surround this area, but also to get hold of opportunity for *some reflection* on current practice of higher education.

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