

Foreword

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Contemporary academic didactics faces a multitude of challenges as it adapts to a rapidly evolving educational landscape marked by technological advancements, changing student demographics, and shifting societal expectations. These challenges demand innovative approaches, as traditional methodologies often fall short in addressing the complexities of modern education and to understand them fully, it is essential to consider the influence of digital transformation, the increasing diversity of student populations, and the demand for interdisciplinary and practical skills in academic curricula.

First and foremost, one of the most prominent dilemmas in contemporary didactics is the integration of digital technology in the classroom. While digital tools have the potential to enhance learning experiences, they also require careful implementation to be truly effective. Educators often face the difficult task of balancing traditional teaching methods with the incorporation of new technologies such as online learning platforms, artificial intelligence, and interactive media. The shift to digital learning, especially accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has raised questions about the effectiveness of online education compared to in-person instruction. Consequently, educators must adapt to hybrid or fully online formats while ensuring that learning outcomes are not compromised. This task is complicated by varying levels of digital literacy among both students and teachers, resulting in a disparity in engagement and comprehension.

Furthermore, the demand for interdisciplinary and practical skills is reshaping academic curricula, placing additional pressure on didactic strategies. As industries increasingly prioritize skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and adaptability, academic institutions must equip students with competencies beyond theoretical knowledge. However, teaching such skills within the confines of a traditional academic structure is challenging. Didactic models have traditionally emphasized knowledge acquisition and mastery of specific subjects; however, today's students require training in soft skills that are often best developed through experiential learning. Project-based learning, case studies, and internships are examples of approaches that help bridge the gap between theory and practice. Nevertheless, incorporating these methods requires a substantial shift from traditional lecture-based instruction, presenting logistical and organizational challenges for institutions and faculty.

Additionally, contemporary didactics must address the challenge of student motivation and engagement, which have become increasingly difficult in the digital age. The prevalence of social media, online entertainment, and other digital distractions can hinder students' ability to focus and engage deeply with academic content. To counteract this, educators must develop strategies that captivate and sustain students' attention. Interactive and student-centred approaches, such as problem-based learning or flipped classrooms, have shown promise in enhancing engagement. However, these methods require educators to invest more time and effort in lesson planning and implementation, which may not always be feasible given resource constraints.

The selection of articles presented in the following part proves how important a new perspective and modern teaching methods for the current higher education are. Except for the text by Czaja, the rest of articles focus on best teaching practices that were initiated by *Masters of Didactics Training – Advanced Teaching Qualifications* supervised by the Polish Ministry of Higher Education and the University in Groningen. As follows, articles by Jędrzejczak, Nowak and Gryglik concentrate on methods and

improvements that have been applied to offer greater educational opportunities, to motivate and engage students in their own educational process and finally to enhance students' well-being. Furthermore, Redzimska and Sulikowski by presenting their peer tutoring and peer feedback projects highlight the importance of developing students' hard and soft skills as strategies for building future careers. Yet, Przybyła-Kasparek et al. introduce another approach to the academic didactics, namely pointing to the significance of preparing doctoral students to become leaders in higher education attentive to diverse students' needs, capable of enhancing learning outcomes and contributing to the advancement of educational standards. The last article by Czaja is a proposal for teaching a selected course in English phonetics, especially at an academic level, which aims at revealing practical solutions for a language-oriented prosody.

In conclusion, contemporary academic didactics faces a complex array of challenges, each requiring tailored solutions that balance innovation with traditional educational values. To address these challenges effectively, educational institutions must adopt a flexible and dynamic approach, continually reassessing and refining their didactic strategies. While the road ahead is fraught with difficulties, it also presents an opportunity for educators to rethink and rejuvenate academic didactics, thereby enhancing learning outcomes and preparing students more effectively for the demands of the modern world.