



Tutoring Programme at the Faculty of Science and Arts, Sapiientia University

The public opinion and the educational politics are awarding an increasing role in the system for the non-formal, alternative educational practices and ways. This tendency is valid for both pre-university and university education as well. It seems to be an outdated perception that education can only be practised in the one teacher – more students, strictly in the classroom/auditorium way, or at least this method is not the only successful one. In the lack of integrated government politics in this field, the educational institutions with innovative spirit, thinking outside the box, try to offer some alternatives besides the classic way, alternatives which aim both at students above and below average.

The Faculty of Science and Arts of the Sapiientia Hungarian University of Transylvania is an innovative, open-minded institute; thus, it is natural and common that it implements alternative educational and research methods. One of the most popular and successful alternative optional programmes in the 2013-2014 academic year was the tutoring programme. The tutor-student educational relationship is a model taken from the Anglo-Saxon system, which significantly contradicts the educational policies of Eastern and Central Europe. Its essence stands in the direct and systematic contact between the tutor and his tutored student, this way developing his/her skills, conducting his/her path, offering him/her guidance, but letting him/her gather own practical, empirical knowledge. The Sapiientia University naturalized this perception in its system and optimized it to the local needs and resources, with the specific goal to assist the talented and gifted students. During the programme, the student is in systematic contact with his tutor, with whom he devises a research plan in some pre-specified topics, and afterwards he effectuates the research with various instruments. At the end of the one-year programme, as a crowning of the scientific work, the results of the research are presented at the Scientific Conference of the Students (TDK) in front of a professional jury and audience.

The Progress

The Tutoring Programme develops with time according to a pre-established plan. The Programme is announced in the first month of the academic year. The

professor willing to become a tutor sets a couple of topics in which s/he can provide guidance for a researching student. Besides these given topics within their specialization, the potential tutors are open to other suggestions coming from the student if they consider them relevant and close enough to their field of research. In order to participate in the programme, students have to send in an application in which they have to present their research plan and a cover letter. After evaluating and judging the applications, a solemn event takes place where a Tutoring Contract is signed between the three participants of this programme: the tutor, the student and the hosting university. The agreement states both the opportunities and obligations of each. After this moment, the greatest part of the programme starts, during which the research and scientific work is accomplished in practice. Weekly or monthly discussions about the achievements during research and co-ordination of future plans take place.

The Scientific Conference of the Students of the Faculty is the frame within which the tutored student can present the fruits of a year's hard work in front of a professional jury, who comments on it in order to amend the work. The student has to summarize his/her work in a scientific study and make a presentation of it. A higher level competition of these studies is the Transylvanian Scientific Conference of the Students and, if one 'gets lucky,' the national level of the conference held every two years in different places.

Benefits – Opportunities – Obligations

This programme brings several benefits to each of the involved parties. These are mostly aimed at the student as the main beneficiary. The tutored student can participate in conferences, study trips and scientific events where other students cannot such as study trips to Brussels, Budapest etc. The student can benefit of the opportunity to do a scientific research with the help of an expert in the particular field of study and to use a great amount of professional documentation. An obligation for the student is to present his work at the SCS of the Faculty, and (if it is selected) at the Transylvanian SCS. The tutor's obligations are professional guidance and judgment of the research in its development.

In this academic year, I had the honour to be part of this amazing programme, which truly supports the cultivation of talent and of gifted students from various universities. It is important to understand the double role of universities. The 'universitas' is the place of education and of developing research as well. In the last decades, the educational objective of universities prevailed against the objective of research, but this tendency is wrong. The development of science and the improvement of living standards require the second objective as well. This is why scientific student groups are important and this is why scientific

conferences of students are important as a festival, a holiday of hard work in these academic circles. The seriousness of the programme provided by the Sapientia University is proven by the several scientific events and trips I participated in. Aside from these reasons, I think my greatest profit from this programme was the inner, individual and subjective scientific satisfaction, which became complete at the very moment I finished the research and reached the conclusions, and which stimulates me to take advantage of this opportunity the next academic year as well and be part of this programme, during which, for a year, we were called simply but so meaningfully ‘tutorisok’ (tutored ones).

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