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Teaching microeconomic principles for IT students

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Abstract

The demand for experts in the field of information and communication technologies, who in addition to professional knowledge and skills have quality management and economic capabilities, is constantly growing. It is due to the fact that these candidates are not only technically proficient, but are able to respond to the new demand, innovate old markets and gain the interest of customers. The contribution introduced points out the content and methodological aspect for teaching bases of Microeconomics for the students of Informatics. It presents the occurrence of Microeconomic theory in practice and proposal of teaching methods for the practical application of economic knowledge.

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1. Introduction

The primary objective of universities is the creation of knowledge, as well as their replication, publication and application. The added value of each educational institution in the process of education is determined by not only the number, but mainly the quality of the graduates in the form of their ability to further growth and facilities for practice. The continuous development of information and communication technologies is reflected also in the growth of the number of candidates for study in the fields of Informatics, Computer engineering, and other related information and communication fields. Many young people today, however, come to study with the idea of what they want to be and how much they would like to earn in the future, but without knowledge of what the specific requirements they will be asked for in the future in a given employment or working position. Universities must also

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adapt the methods and content of teaching to the current requirements of the labour market. Therefore, their primary task is the identification and analysis of the current educational needs, which includes a series of activities, which lead to the definition of the difference between the desired state in the future and the present and the subsequent choice of appropriate educational activities. In doing so, it is necessary to examine not only the needs of a particular company, market, as well as the needs of society and economy as a whole.

The objective of our contribution is, based on the analysis of the current state, to identify the areas of Microeconomics the students of the Department of Informatics can meet with in their future profession and subsequent proposal of teaching methods, how to make this area of Economics the most addressed to them.

2. Related work

There are many perspectives and recommendations how to bring economic theory nearer students. The reference literature in this field includes research results f. e. from Gardner, 1991, Walstad & Allgood, 1999, Becker, 1995, Becker & Watts, 1997, Davis & Erikson, 1998. The results of the experts point out that the students of universities have little economic knowledge, despite the fact that they went through a variety of economic subjects and courses during their study. (Walstad & Allgood, 1999; Gardner, 1991; Allgood, 2001). The cause of the problem, according to experts at the education in the field of Economics, is the reluctance of teachers to apply new and innovative teaching methods. As a result of this approach there may come to failure how to keep the attention of those students who are more technically and philosophically-minded, and decrease in their performance. "Educational activity is successful if it fulfils set learning objectives and expectations of interested subjects" (Rostašová, Čorejová & Chrenková, 2013). Many experts think that the key to understanding economics is first and foremost an understanding of the everyday activities of people.

It is also disputable that, standard outlines of subjects are primarily focused only on teaching economic theory according to the neo-classics and they do not admit teaching about new economic approaches and paradigms, although on the other hand, many agree that the understanding of the main issues of Economics, as they are defined in the neo-classical economics, is essential and necessity for students to their further economic education. Some experts on education in the field of economics emphasize non-traditional teaching strategies (Sloman & Mitchell, 2002; Taylor, 2002, Walstad & Saunders, 1998) or even the importance of that outline of the subject contains not only the theoretical foundations but also reflect the recent developments in the economy (Sutcliffe, 2002; Holt & McDaniel, 1998, Williams & Walker, 1993; DeYoung 1993, Volpe, 2002; Buckles, 1998; Noussair & Walker, 1998; Oxoby, 2001). Also, the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the process of teaching and learning of Economics is notable and useful (Hobbs & Judge, 1995; Brooksbank et al, 1998;. Sosin, 1998; Chalmers & McCausland, 2002; O'Leary & Ramsden, 2002, Elliott, 2003, Frank, 1998). "Effective management of innovation processes (also in field of education) encourages innovative activities in business and will bring it expected results in the future." (Lendel, & Varmus, 2013).

3. Method, data and partial findings

University teaching of Microeconomics can't do without the knowledge of other disciplines, especially Mathematics, as well as without the knowledge of requirements of the practice. When drafting the content of the subject, it is therefore important to know these links and clarify what students of Informatics should know after graduating from this subject. The fundamental questions, which should be clarified include:

- What subjects students have already gone through and what knowledge they have already mastered?
- What economic areas the students of Informatics have the greatest weaknesses?
- What are their strengths and weaknesses?
- What working situation indicates a need for education in Microeconomics?
- What will students know to do better / more efficiently after graduating Microeconomics? (What is to be a value added of subject for IT students?)
- What would happen if they did not have a chance to take Microeconomics?
- How to take interest of students as much as possible? (What educational method to choose in teaching Microeconomics for IT students?)

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