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ANNO 1919

U N I V E R S I T Y O F L A T V I A

Open education: *thoughts and observations*

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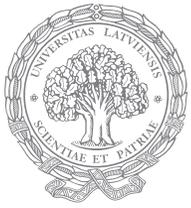
Content of the presentation

- The role and the mission of universities in a modern society
- Some theories on knowledge
- Some thoughts and observations on Open Education and Open Education Resources
- The experience of the University of Latvia

The role of universities in a modern society

Universities historically exist as institutions for the creation and dispersion of knowledge. Roman poet Horace once wrote “Sapere Aude” or dare to know. The main goals of academia and universities are development and invention of new knowledge, implementation of knowledge in the study process, teaching to think, gaining and applying knowledge, and also promoting the knowledge not just for students and scientists, but also wider society.





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Sapere Aude!
Dare to know!

/Horace/



Knowledge..

Knowledge is power - this insight is at least four centuries old, formulated by philosopher Francis Bacon during the Enlightenment. His statement has lost nothing in terms of relevance and significance: Knowledge is power, and education is the fundamental precondition for political development, democracy and social justice.

In modern society while everything is hyperactively developing, openness of knowledge is an essential part of the definition of knowledge. It is a precondition of knowledge development to be widely open and to be used, to be understood.



Different perspectives

- From the perspective of theology, knowledge is the concept of perceiving and understanding; knowledge changes and challenges;
- From the perspective of sociology, knowledge is constructed not created;
- Etc.

Open Education: *opportunities*

The term open education was introduced in 2002 during a forum held by the UNESCO as *the open provision of educational resources, enabled by information and communication technologies, for consultation, use and adaptation by a community of users for non-commercial purposes.*

Leveraging information technologies to equalize access to education has ever since been a core motivation for this movement – *“eliminate the access gap to high-quality education in the developing world”* (Pereira, 2007, 42).

Open Education: *challenges*

Today's learners ride the open frontier between formal and informal learning. As educational content is increasingly available for free over the Internet, making effective use of informal and incidental online learning opportunities **has become a challenge for students, teachers, researchers and self-organized learners**. Whereas traditional textbooks perform the role of information gatekeeper, the Internet floods the learner with a veritable cornucopia of educational resources.

General information on University of Latvia

The University of Latvia is a classical university (founded in 1919), composed of 13 academic faculties, 20 research institutes, administrative departments, libraries and museums. It is also one of the largest comprehensive and leading research universities in Latvia and Baltic states.

As a classical university, the University of Latvia offers a broad range and a classical spectrum of subjects instead of focusing on just one academic area. The classical spectrum of subjects includes the humanities, natural sciences and social sciences.



Information about study programmes in the University of Latvia

The University offers 131 state accredited academic Bachelor's, Master's, PhD and professional study programmes. 53 of them are undergraduate study programmes, 54 – higher level study programmes, 24 - PhD study programmes.

University holds around 6000 courses each year. While many courses and study programmes are taught in Latvian, a significant number are taught in English and adapted to the needs of international students. University offers 28 study programmes for international students.

At the University of Latvia there is an ongoing process of new study programmes development. New study programmes at the University are always relevant in relation to societal needs and live up to international standards for educations.



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Information about study programmes in the University of Latvia II

Undergraduate studies

Programme type	Number of study programmes	Average length of the study programme
1st level professional higher education study programme	2	2
Academic bachelor's study programmes	33	3-4
Professional bachelor's study programme	16	4
2nd level professional higher education study programme	2	5-6

Postgraduate studies

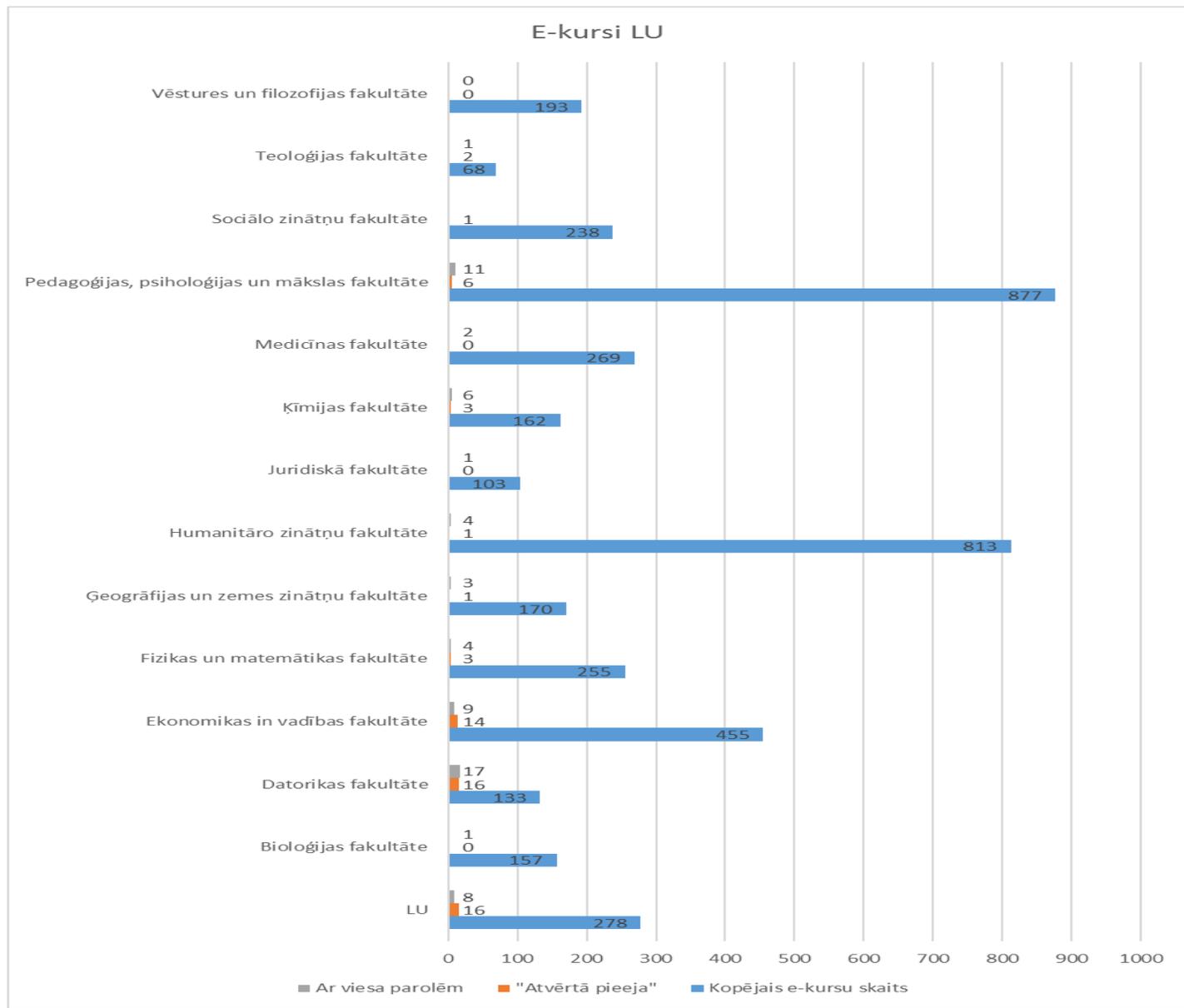
Programme type	Number of study programmes	Average length of the study programme
Academic master's study programmes	37	3-4
Professional master's study programme	15	1-2
2nd level professional higher education study programme	2	1.5-2
PhD study programmes	24	3



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E-courses in UL



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Strategy 2020

Expected results:

- Increase of the amount of students (also international);
- Decrease of the drop-out rate;
- Development of the new study programmes;
- Modernisation of existing study programmes (development of new study forms);
- Satisfaction of the needs of existing students;
- Attraction of international staff;
- Development of internal quality assurance system etc.



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