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Pedagogy of Higher Education in Ukraine: Concepts and Trends of Modernity

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Abstract---*The growing need of society for a new quality of education is a determining factor that encourages researchers to deal with the problems of innovative education. Ukraine is today at a difficult stage in its history, determined by exceptional external and internal challenges, and higher education in this country is called upon to become one of the critically important elements of the foundation for the country's further development, the parameters of its European integration process, and the construction of its global competitive advantage. Based on a combination of narrative review and integrative review, the article investigates peculiarities and patterns of Ukrainian contemporary HE pedagogy, outlining its challenges and prospects within the global HE landscape.*
Keywords---*HE pedagogy patterns, Humanization of education, Technologization in education, Transformative practice in education, Ukrainian HE challenges.*

Introduction

The dynamism of the development of socio-economic, political, and cultural transformations in Ukraine imposes new high demands in all spheres of society. The educational system, including higher pedagogical schools, plays a decisive role in the development of society. The established pedagogical education of Ukraine, as it develops, accumulates diverse experience, creates and strengthens the material and technical base, and constantly enriches the scientific, theoretical, organizational, and methodological foundation for training teaching staff, has long and rightfully declared itself as a powerful branch of spiritual production, entering a new era of implementing its professional and socio-cultural functions (Wengrowicz, 2014).

The post-industrial stage of the civilized development of humanity, which it entered in the new millennium, dictates the need to form a new type of consciousness that meets the specifications of the vector of civilization development. This global phenomenon, in its scale, imposes additional obligations on higher pedagogical schools, aiming to understand its advanced functions, which aggravates the complex picture of crisis phenomena in education, and determines its modernization in all countries, orienting social and economic policy towards further advancement along the path of progress. The efforts undertaken by the world community to overcome the growing crisis in education were reflected in the Bologna Declaration of 1999, signed by 29 European countries, and stipulating large-scale reforms of the Ukrainian system of higher education.

The modern pedagogy of higher education in Ukraine focuses on the formation of the future specialist's personality, the development of critical thinking, independence, and professional competencies in students. It involves changing the role of the teacher to a mentor, the use of modern technologies, analysis and forecasting the development of the higher education system, as well as adaptation to European and world standards. Diversifying the training of specialists of the “new generation”, higher education is reoriented to an innovative path of development: education is being informatized, new educational technologies are being created and introduced, efforts are being intensified to improve the quality of education and training of specialists who are competitive and mobile in the labor market, to organize new research, and to search for consumers of final results (Nagachevska et al., 2025; Soroka & Akimova, 2020).

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However, due to transformational and political factors, the higher education system of Ukraine is in the process of constant reform. Due to the uniqueness of the educational landscape, historical background, and external conditions in which modern higher education pedagogy in Ukraine develops, it represents a valuable example for a comprehensive study, the results of which could shed some light on the overall patterns of development of higher education pedagogy in emerging countries.

Materials and Methods

The methodological basis of the study was formed by the conceptual provisions of philosophy, sociology, pedagogy and psychology. They consist of system-holistic and personal-activity complex approaches, ideas about the contradictory nature of scientific knowledge, the basis of which is the dialectical integration and differentiation of knowledge about the influence of social processes on the development of theoretical foundations of education. Historical, socio-psychological, and synergetic approaches were used in the study and analysis of pedagogical phenomena.

The research methodology involves a synthesis of synergetic, phenomenological, and activity-based approaches, represented by the ideas of the holistic Man, self-development as a non-linear and continuous process. A methodological toolkit comprises two intertwined approaches - : narrative review and integrative review. Combining these approaches allowed us to trace opinions and findings of Ukrainian and foreign authors, and juxtapose them, revealing and formulating overall patterns of HE pedagogy in contemporary Ukraine.

Results and Discussions

State-of-the-art

The dynamic development of modern pedagogical science is characterized by the search for fundamental approaches to building the educational process, which is reflected in the educational documents of Ukraine, which state that the goal of education and upbringing should be a professionally competent, proactive, creative citizen, endowed with a sense of duty and responsibility to society, able to quickly adapt to the modern world, the characteristic features of which are the increase in the role of the individual, the intellectualization of its activities in the context of rapid changes in technology and engineering, continuous exponential growth in the volume of information and the renewal of knowledge, constant expansion and deepening of the spheres of scientific research. The intensification of information flows, as one of the main factors of the globalized world entering the era of the information society, reflects the crisis of the classical scientific paradigm, which is manifested in the spread of two opposing trends in modern science - universalization and integration of knowledge on the one hand, and their scientific and technical specialization - on the other (Gladush & Lysenko, 2014).

Among the Ukrainian researchers who considered the problems and trends of the functioning and development of higher education, we can mention such as V. Andrushchenko, S. Bebko, F. Vashchuk, V. Vytkalov, N. Bidyuk, M. Golovan, S. Goncharenko, O. Dashkovska, O. Dubaseniuk, I. Zyazyun, Yu. Kozlovsky, V. Kremen, K. Korsak, A. Ligotsky, V. Madzigon, S. Sysoeva, N. Tymoshenko. Foreign scientists also dealt with this issue: F. J. Altbach, T. Dai, T. Kygo, A. Kelly, K. Lyswood, D. Lawton, T. Moe, S. Parsons, L. Raisberg, L. Rabley, J. Chub, etc. Although these scientists have repeatedly raised key issues of the development of the educational sector in their research, the lack of a systematic approach in their views on the emergence of most problems has led to the fact that they remain unresolved (Bratkevych, 2024). Based on this, it is of particular importance to study the main development trends inherent primarily in the educational sphere of Ukraine, while simultaneously formulating problems that negatively affect the development of national higher education pedagogy.

Today, two trends are simultaneously observed in the landscape of higher education: humanization and technologization of higher education in Ukraine. They mean an orientation towards the individual and his/her development (humanization) and the active introduction of modern technologies (technologization) to improve the educational process. Humanization involves the formation of a creative personality, the priority of universal human values and harmonious relationships, while technologization means the use of new, in particular computer, technologies for more effective learning, control, and mental development of students (Dimova, 2025).

Since the humanistic paradigm is constantly changing under the influence of civilizational and social challenges, the subject of study is the trends in their development. Voznyuk (2014), for example, identifies changes in the trends of personality development in the modern paradigm of education: the expansion of the philosophical and reflective aspect of pedagogy; the development of the value-psychological factor; the ability to quickly respond to the

challenges of today, find new solutions and approaches to learning; globalization of education based on generally accepted norms in society; development of the system-integration aspect of pedagogy; deepening of human-centrism, value-conscious orientation of education.

At the same time, technologization in higher education in Ukraine is a comprehensive integration of modern educational, information, and communication and pedagogical technologies into the educational process to increase its efficiency, accessibility, and compliance with the requirements of the digital age. It includes the implementation of electronic and online learning, adaptive systems, the use of virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and other innovative methods to improve the assimilation of material and the development of students' personal qualities.

Tereshchuk et al. (2023), highlight the features of the organization of an innovative technological format in the educational process of higher education. Researchers argue that the positioning of the information and communication, technological, and digital environment in the educational paradigm of a higher education institution should have clear ways of implementation and a specific purpose, the ultimate result of which should be an increase in the quality of education.

Synergistic principles characteristic of the pragmatic approach to the educational process, which is characteristic of the modern socio-cultural space, involve the development of universal learning environments that will allow establishing a common field for traditional and innovative learning mechanisms and tools (Aljawarneh, 2019). Among the formats of innovative learning, there are many definitions that indicate the information-communicative, technological, or digital nature of the learning environment. However, if we consider the innovativeness of the learning process from the point of view of synergistic principles of interaction and self-organization, then the definition of TEL (technologically enhanced learning) is relevant. With such a positioning, the fundamental educational purpose is not leveled, but the focus is on changing the format of the learning environment.

In recent years, the trends of digitalization of higher education have significantly intensified. Digitalization of education makes it possible to plan new strategies for organizing the educational space, which are based on digital technologies. In Ukraine, first due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and then due to the war in February 2022, all organizational components of the educational process were significantly disrupted, both in the education system as a whole and in each educational institution (Kornyat et al., 2022). It is generally recognized that during the pandemic and war situation, the latest technologies and systems are actively used in the educational process. This involves the use of digital tools and the creation of online platforms aimed at providing quick and convenient access to digitized materials, identifying patterns in the coursework, building individual educational trajectories, and possible prediction of students' likely exam scores, remote interaction of project group participants, remote access to laboratory and research center equipment, consortia, situation modeling, testing, etc.

Ukrainian researcher Golovnya (2023) studies how modern technological innovations can transform higher education, turning it from a traditional academic center into a unique educational, scientific, and innovative complex. This complex should combine education, science, and innovation, creating the necessary infrastructure and promoting close interaction between different spheres. The main focus of the study is to consider proposals for improving the process of digitalization of education in Ukraine. In the context of considering universities as knowledge corporations, the author presents improved methods of activating innovative activity using the resources of digital platforms. Internal activation methods are considered, which include interaction with programs of infrastructure centers and platforms of national technological initiatives. Special attention is paid to the processes of resource virtualization and uberization in educational and management processes, particularly, the importance of these concepts for e-libraries. The authors draw attention to the need to update the IT infrastructure and ensure accessibility to digital resources. The article also focuses on the role of artificial intelligence in the educational process, in particular, its impact on teachers and the teaching process (Leal Filho et al., 2018). The costs and benefits of using artificial intelligence are considered, including the development of new educational information publications, the possibility of conducting online tests, and participating in scientific competitions. The study also considers an approach to knowledge management, which includes strategies for collecting and updating educational materials, their joint creation, and sharing. The importance of interaction between innovative actions and educational activities of universities is emphasized for the effective digitalization of the economy and education.

At the same time, Kornyat et al. (2022), investigating the benefits that teachers receive in the process of digitalization in education, describe the questionnaire they developed, which was published at the All-Ukrainian Scientific Internet Conference “Domestic Science at the Turn of Epochs: Problems and Development Prospects”. 46 respondents took part in the survey, and the answers were divided as follows: The categories “Ability to learn anywhere and anytime” (94%) and “Availability of various tools for autonomous learning” (91%) received the largest number of votes. The categories “Continuous access to technologies” (78%), “Ability to access scientific publications” (82%), and “Ability to have general access to electronic resources” (80%) were almost evenly distributed. Such results clearly indicate that even active representatives of Ukrainian higher education, participating

in scientific conferences dedicated to innovations in education, do not realize the real potential of digital technologies in higher education. Their ideas about the purpose of digital technologies are at the level of the late 1990s and early 2000s, when the main advantage of digital technologies in education was indeed access to scientific databases from anywhere.

Maiev & Nasakina (2023), draw attention to the fact that hardly any Ukrainian university is among the top performers in international rankings. Nine Ukrainian higher education institutions are included in the "Times Higher Education World University Ranking 2020", which ranks approximately 1500 of the world's finest universities. Poland, for example, has 19 universities, whereas Germany and the United Kingdom both have over 100. The researchers also suggest that the competitiveness of Ukrainian universities is hampered by a variety of structural issues that have not been addressed in many years. Ukrainian universities, for example, are far from achieving a healthy balance of research and education. Teaching dominates research. The relationship between science and education in Ukrainian institutions is purely declarative. Fewer and fewer young people are interested in science, the number of postgraduate and doctoral students is steadily decreasing year after year, and the low effectiveness of HEI's scientific research activities lowers their rating in comparison to universities in other countries (Maiev & Nasakina, 2023).

Challenges and their roots

Today, many Ukrainian scholars and experts call the war challenges in Ukrainian HE "an existential crisis" (Oleksiyenko et al., 2023). However, war did not become a root of this crisis; rather, it only aggravated the existing negative trends. Higher education institutions in the western (and some central) regions of Ukraine were actually not affected by hostilities, that is, their functioning took place in a stable mode, and they did not face the need for crisis restructuring of the educational process, that is, the deterioration in the quality of graduate training is actually associated exclusively with internal patterns of reduced efficiency. It is significant that after graduation, not even half of the graduates are employed (not to mention in their specialty). The Ministry of Education and Science published data from the report on monitoring the employment of state-funded graduates for 2022, prepared by it, the Ministry of Digital Affairs, and the Pension Fund. According to this report, only 46.18% of graduates are considered "employed and conditionally employed", in 2021, there were 58.96%. At the same time, enterprises are short of hands, and there is a record number of vacancies on the labor market (Korodenko, 2024). Employers consider the lack of practice and detachment from reality to be the main problem. Company representatives rate the skills and knowledge in design, analysis of engineering problems, research, and English proficiency as the worst.

Meanwhile, back in 2016, Ukrainian experts in the field of education emphasized that the construction of a national education system in Ukraine involves a new approach to the professional training of future personnel, aimed at overcoming the crisis in education, which is manifested, first of all, in the discrepancy between students' knowledge and individual needs, social needs and world standards, in the devaluation of the social prestige of education and intellectual activity (Shevchenko, 2016). The main criterion for the work of a higher educational institution is the level of preparedness of graduates, a rational combination of their theoretical knowledge with the ability to apply it in practice, which means the need to search for effective forms and methods of training, improve programs, curricula, develop new teaching methods, textbooks, etc.

Future experts are regarded as those who possess the capacity for self-improvement, creativity, and innovative thinking, as well as the ability to self-organize their lives and engage in highly productive professional activities (Gulay, 2017). The theoretical level involves substantiating the integration transformation of the traditional content of the educational process, establishing relationships and harmonizing the programs of teaching disciplines at different levels of continuing education, structural restructuring of technological support for knowledge acquisition, etc. Acmeological technologies allow for the successful formation of gnostic, design, constructive, organizational, and communicative skills. Active implementation of synergistic principles in the educational process will contribute to the formation of nonlinear, systemic, and creative thinking, the identification of hidden potential and promising trends in one's own development. The competency-based approach pays special attention to the mechanisms of forming conscious motivation for learning, considering them as a condition for high-quality education and successful professional activity of an individual. The practical level consists of the practical implementation of all components of the pedagogical system of professional training of future construction specialists in the conditions of continuing education and the study of their pedagogical effectiveness (Kilicheva & Klicheva, 2021). It is necessary to create a complex of educational and methodological support that combines a high scientific and methodological level and adaptability to the needs and capabilities of students. The application of these conceptual approaches makes it possible to represent the professional training of future specialists in the conditions of continuing education as a

multidimensional phenomenon - a system of scientifically substantiated measures and pedagogical influences built based on the specifics of the organization of educational and cognitive activity, general pedagogical patterns, approaches, and principles (Gulay, 2017).

Of course, all this is an element of the advanced world pedagogy of higher education. However, the practical implementation of such paradigms in the Ukrainian educational space cannot always be called successful.

An obvious trend, in particular, is the politicization of Ukrainian higher education pedagogy, which is associated with the strengthening of the role of the state in regulating the educational system, including financing, quality control, and the content of curricula. This is manifested in attempts to unify standards, support certain ideologies, and influence educational materials to meet state objectives and national policy, which causes both support and criticism from the scientific community and the public. Against the background of geopolitical processes, there is an increased influence of state policy on educational institutions, which makes the process more manageable and accountable to the state. Of course, it is natural that in conditions of political instability and external threats, the state seeks to consolidate its efforts and take control of the education sector to ensure national security and stability. However, as the historical experience of other countries shows, excessive politicization and control can lead to the fact that education will become less focused on scientific research and innovation, and more on the implementation of political tasks. One of the negative effects of politicization and increased state control in higher education has become a kind of “algorithmization” of research papers of students and postgraduates: a rigid template for formulating a topic, a rigid template structure of the text of subsections and even paragraphs of papers, etc., which greatly limits the creative and critical thinking of students, creating the risk of graduates lacking the skills necessary for the workplace in the VUCA and even BANI world: the ability to find non-standard solutions in complex situations, developed critical thinking, flexibility, etc.

The experience of the countries that are members of the Five Eyes Alliance can be cited as a positive example for Ukrainian pedagogy in the context of today's external challenges. In particular, in the fight against China’s efforts to build a network of hidden influence in the academic communities of these countries, governments and higher education institutions have introduced some administrative and legal restrictions, especially in the areas of training and scientific developments related to industry/engineering and technologies that have a direct or indirect relation to national security. However, these measures did not affect the academic freedom of students and postgraduates in choosing and formulating research topics in Social Science and Humanities, and no new regulations were introduced for the structures of academic papers (other than the classically accepted ones).

As stated in the monograph by Sakun et al. (2020), the strategic task of the educational process today is the formation of a thinking, creative personality, the development of its intellectual and moral level, natural abilities, and predispositions. At the same time, the general trends in the progress of society in the global world have determined the urgent need to find new means and incentives for the development of pedagogical science and practice, and the restructuring of the structural elements of the Ukrainian education system. Also, according to the authors, only human-centered education, free from dogmatism and outdated schemes, will open up opportunities for the realization of personal potential in the world of global transformations. It is such education that will be able to solve technological, economic, social, and cultural problems posed by the dynamics of civilizational progress. The productive solution of these problems is provided by the intellectual potential of the philosophy of education. It is emphasized that the strategic task of the educational process today is the formation of a thinking, creative personality, the development of its intellectual and moral level, natural abilities, and predispositions. At the same time, the general trends of society's progress in the global world have determined the urgent need to find new means and incentives for the development of pedagogical science and practice, and to restructure the structural elements of the Ukrainian education system. Only human-centered education, free from dogmatism and outdated schemes, will open up opportunities for the realization of personal potential in a world of global transformations.

Naturally, the growth of higher education in Ukraine is conducted in accordance with specific principles, and it is harmonized with the demands of the European area. First and foremost, this is the introduction of breakthrough scientific and educational achievements. It is well recognized that the creative path of societal growth is what may guarantee the emergence of a new generation of thinkers and workers. The development of the personality, its cultural and communicative preparedness, the capacity to independently learn and grow, and the construction of information and social skills will thus receive the majority of the emphasis.

Modern higher education pedagogy in Ukraine is focused on adapting education to social and technological changes, developing new methods and technologies of teaching and upbringing, as well as on forming future specialists through the development of critical thinking and professional skills. The key tasks are to improve the content of education, modernize the forms and methods of teaching, and ensure the humanization and democratization of the educational process.

According to Kolomiiets (2023), among educational and pedagogical innovations aimed at developing cognitive activity and personal qualities of students within the framework of Ukrainian higher education, various learning technologies are distinguished, first of all, these are problem technology, game technology, technologies of collective and group activity; modern educational technologies in the higher education system are also considered to be personality-oriented, integration, collective action, information, distance, creative, modular and developmental, etc. They should become the basis for effective didactic-methodical, psychological, and communicative interaction between a student and a teacher and the manifestation of competent skills. In this technology, the individual, that is, the higher education applicant, is the main subject, the goal, and not the means of achieving the set goal; The leading innovative technologies in higher education practice are the technology of credit-modular, problem-based, contextual, project-based, training learning, game approach, and information and communication technology. Advanced pedagogical technologies also include computer, telecommunication, multimedia, distance, game, and project technologies etc.

It should be noted that scientists from Western Europe, the USA, and Asia-Pacific countries are actively considering and discussing topical issues of pedagogical innovations (PI) in education. The emphasis is placed on the fact that PI is our complex issue of the process of creation, development, and practical application of pedagogical innovations that are of direct importance for education (Chigbu et al., 2023; Lata, 2024). PI are considered in the light of methods and forms of teaching, organization, and management of educational institutions. PI should meet the following criteria: optimality, creativity, and theoretical and methodological validity. PI actively implements the developmental potential of learning, proceeds from the independent value of search activities, sets goals of a high cognitive level, puts the teacher in the position of an equal partner in the educational process, implies personal involvement of all training participants, high personal and professional readiness of the teacher for flexible, tactful interaction with students.

Thomas et al. (2025) note that inquiry-based learning and active learning in higher education encourage critical thinking and involvement, enabling students to develop into flexible problem solvers and lifelong learners. Using the VU Block Model®, which is structured around a three-hour class schedule three days a week, their study examines academics' experiences with active and inquiry-based learning approaches. In their university classrooms, academics talked about using active learning strategies including peer teaching, teamwork, practical exercises, and real-world projects. In the framework of the VU Block Model®, the application of inquiry-based learning and active learning offered a chance for pedagogical innovation firmly anchored in Dewey's theory of learning via group and participatory experience.

In line with Dewey's philosophy, active learning is associated with problem-solving, which stimulates cognitive functions like attention and helps students modify their focus so that learning can take charge of their attentional patterns (Schulz et al., 2018). Dewey’s constructivist pedagogy, which emphasizes critical thinking, self-directed learning, and the active exploration of knowledge generation, is also in line with the inquiry-based learning (IBL) approach. IBL pedagogies come in a variety of forms, but they always place a strong emphasis on students' investigative efforts, which include the examination of issues and questions. By encouraging students to ask questions and take charge of their education, this method promotes greater comprehension and memory of the material. Crucially, creating questions, conducting research, reflecting, and concluding are all part of the inquiry process, which takes precedence over the learning or product’s final result.

Dewey’s “pragmatism” is considered well integrated into the philosophy of modern Ukrainian higher education pedagogy. Ukrainian scholars summarize John Dewey's main pedagogical ideas that are relevant for modern education, including higher education, as follows: 1) The accumulation of personal experience by students is above the mastery of systematized scientific knowledge; 2) The educational process should be based on the interests of the student; 3) The orientation of teaching to future activity in society; 4) The method of educational projects (Rogozina et al., 2017). At the same time, Rogozina et al. (2017) write that in higher education, this pedagogical idea can be implemented within the framework of the state policy of career guidance and informing applicants about professions for which there is a shortage of qualified specialists in the real sector of the economy, and encouraging them to master them. This approach, unfortunately, is quite common both in the publications of Ukrainian scientists and in Ukrainian program documents of a regulatory nature: a logical, detailed, and in-depth presentation of theoretical provisions turns into a declarative, and sometimes outdated, description of the proposed practical steps and strategies.

While the Ukrainian educational establishment continues to argue about war challenges, world experts emphasize that in recent years, a tectonic change has forced higher education institutions all over the world to quickly switch to online and mixed learning models. Syska et al. (2025) depict the resourcefulness and tenacity of educators who not only weathered the storm but also emerged with creative techniques that have permanently altered the landscape of

university teaching and learning. The authors emphasize caring, creativity, and resilience in activities that establish community, assist learners, and foster engaged learning through interdisciplinary narratives and scholarly viewpoints from a variety of fields and geography. They provide long-term insights into learner-centered, responsive teaching, describing innovations that practitioners have permanently incorporated across delivery modes. Not surprisingly, the title of Syska et al. (2025), book emphasizes "transformative practice in higher education".

This "transformative practice", evidently, should become the foundation of functioning and development of Ukrainian higher education pedagogy, to enable its real, not declarative correspondence to the EU' HE landscape, to integrate into it as a full-fledged element.

Overall implications (conclusion)

The transformations taking place in all spheres of Ukrainian society - economic, social, political, cultural- could not help but affect the education system, which determines the intellectual potential of the country, which is a condition for its prosperity and development. The upcoming entry of Ukraine into the European Union intensifies competition in the labor markets, where today it is not a narrowly specialized specialist who is in demand, but a professional with firmly formed needs for self-education, capable of creative self-realization and self-determination in a situation of a mobile, constantly changing world, understanding his professional purpose, accepting innovative activity as an important priority of his development, capable and ready for constant renewal. This requires the use of competitive paradigms in the higher education system, which have an innovative basis.

However, it should be recognized that in the modern Ukrainian system of higher education, training of specialists for innovative activities is carried out, in essence, fragmentarily, which is due to the gap between the formulation of paradigmatic and conceptual foundations of national Ukrainian pedagogy and the actual practice characteristic of national universities. Meanwhile, the development of innovative experience is possible only in the innovative process, which is often imitated, since it is implemented using traditional methods of influencing the student, the "knowledge" approach to the formation of the content of education, the politicization of higher education, and other factors.

The first step in implementing innovative teaching methods is recognizing the need for change. Meanwhile, innovative pedagogy combines traditional pedagogy with techno-pedagogical approaches, and this fact should be laid down to 'designing' of further development of contemporary Ukrainian pedagogy. The country has centuries-long strong academic HE traditions, and these traditions should become the root basis for building a competitive advantage of Ukrainian HE pedagogy, within the overall landscape of technologization and digital transformation. In particular, the achievements of the cultural and educational heritage of the princely and Cossack era in the history of Ukraine, the principles of patriotic education of student youth of those times can become an effective basis for overcoming the negative patterns of modern politicization in higher education, and the study and adaptation of advanced foreign experience in building an ecosystem of innovative pedagogy can become the foundation of technological transformations and redesign of curricula.

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