

Master Studies Development Program (MSDP)  
*Training Seminar: Labour market oriented curricula*

HE - fitness **for** purpose & fitness **of** purpose

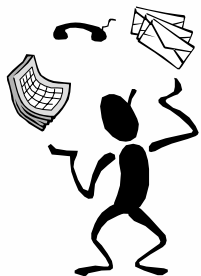


Srbijanka Turajlić, [sturajlic@cep.edu.rs](mailto:sturajlic@cep.edu.rs)

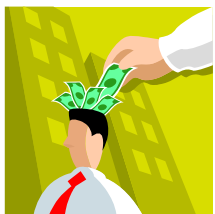
Center for Education Policy, Beograd, [www.cep.edu.rs](http://www.cep.edu.rs),  
Faculty of Electrical Engineering, University of Belgrade



# Outline



## Capabilites (competencies)



## Employability

(Assessment and certification of competencies)



## Customer satisfaction matters?

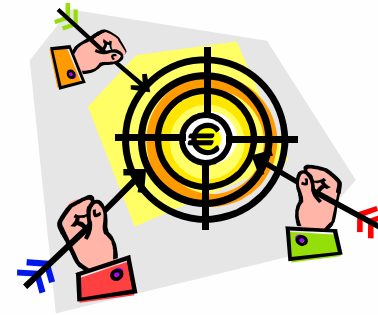
(Business stakeholders analysis)



# Fitness for purpose (but which one?)

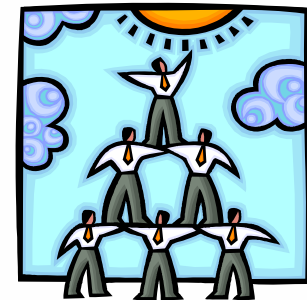
## Quality as a “fitness for purpose”

- Quality equals efficiency
- Who ever questioned quality of “purpose” fitness of purpose

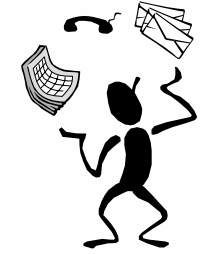


## What is HE for?

- Traditional understanding
  - Pursuit of knowledge and intellectual skills for their own sake
- Who benefits?
  - individuals 👍
  - society as a whole?
  - industry?
- Contemporary requirements
  - each individual gets capacity to be effective in its personal, social and working life

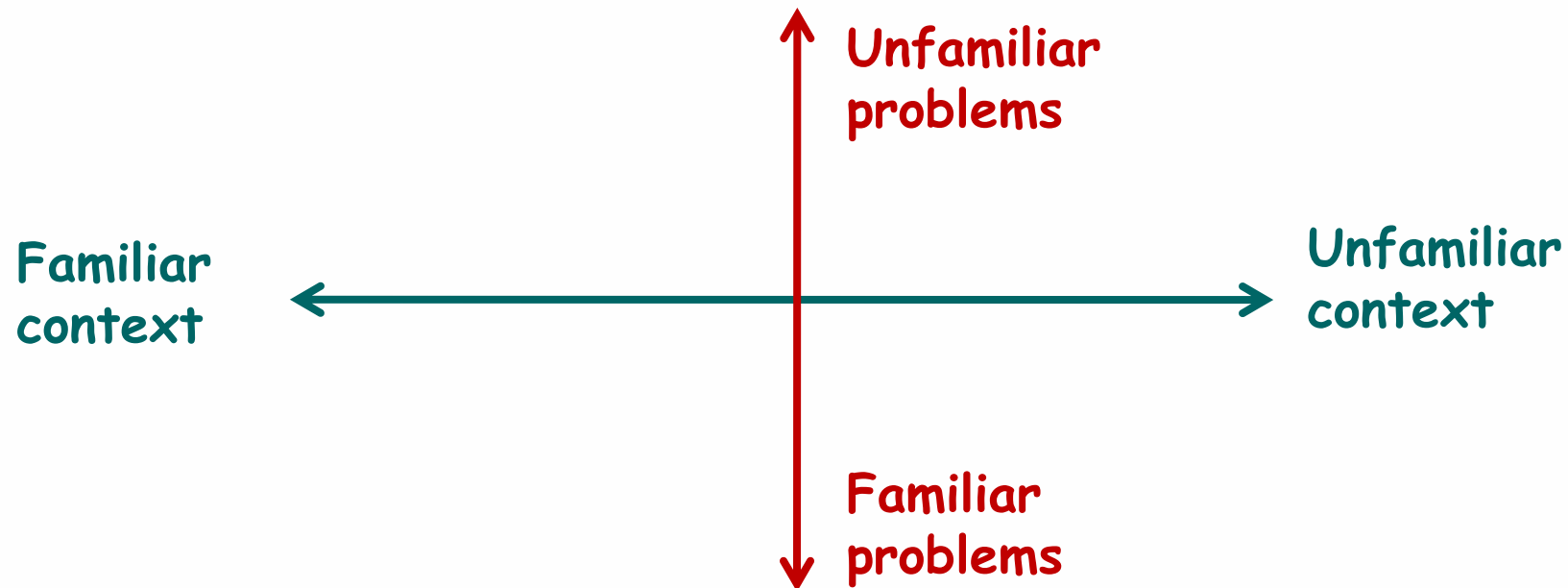


# Capability



## What is capability?

Integration of knowledge, skills, personal qualities and understanding used appropriately and effectively -  
not just in familiar and highly focused specialist context,  
but in response to new and changing circumstances



Stephenson, J. "The Concept of Capability and its Importance in HE"  
<http://www.lmu.ac.uk/hec/>.

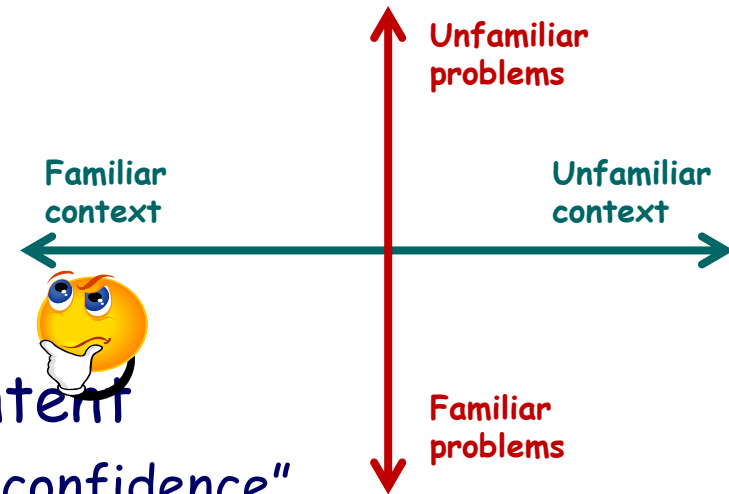


# Capability implies that an individual has justified confidence in its ability to:

- take effective and appropriate action
  - relates to specialist expertise which is in turn enhanced by learning derived from experience
  - involves intuition, ethics, judgments, self-confidence to take risks and a commitment to learn from the experience
- explain what they are about
  - relates not only to oral and written communication skills, but requires self-awareness and confidence in ones specialist knowledge and skills and how they relate to the circumstances
- live and work effectively with others
- continue to learn from their experiences as individuals and in association with others, in a diverse and changing society



# Delivering capabilities in HE



## Specific experience and course content

- if students are to develop “justified confidence” they need real experience:
- excellent opportunity  
*being responsible and accountable for their own learning, within the unfamiliar environment of HE*  
(at the same time, rigorous, interactive and supportive)
- need to develop skills through main-stream curriculum activities
- at odds with a content delivery model which specifies what is to be learned and how it is to be learnt
- move from a model “teaching knowledge” to one of “enabling learning”

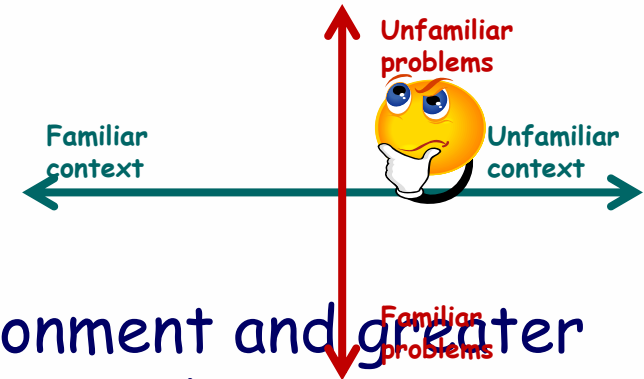


# Independent capability

## Capability and employment

dramatic changes in the working environment and greater understanding of "good performance" at work

- continual and discontinuous technical change, information growth, flatter structures with fewer points of supervision
- employment prospects for graduates are significantly different from those when responsible for designing curricula were students themselves
- expectation to change jobs every two years and careers every ten
- the most significant challenge for graduates will be to manage their relationship with work and with learning
- knowledge, skills, abilities and personal attributes (intellect, willingness to learn, self-motivation, develop ideas, take initiative and responsibility) are much more important than subject knowledge





# Employability - handling labour competencies



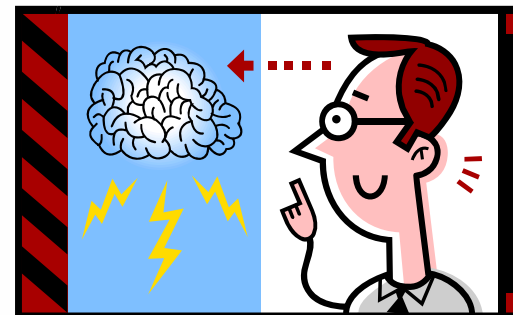
Labour competencies (some definitions)

- attitudes, knowledge and skills that allow developing a comprehensive number of functions and tasks successfully in accordance with the performance criteria that are deemed appropriate in the labour environment
- social construction of significant and useful learning to perform in a real labour situation
- A group of properties under continuous change that need to be put to the test of solving practical problems in labour situations that create certain degrees of uncertainty and have technical complexity

Cannot be obtained from applying a curriculum,



but rather from applying knowledge under critical circumstances.





# Labour competencies



In addition to design competence-based curricula (defined outcomes) it is important to set procedures for



- Identification

- Standardisation

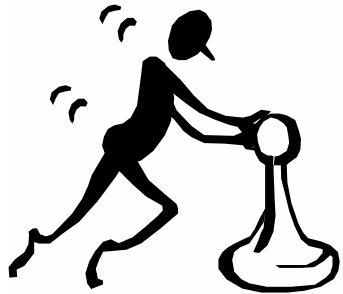


- Assessment

- Certification

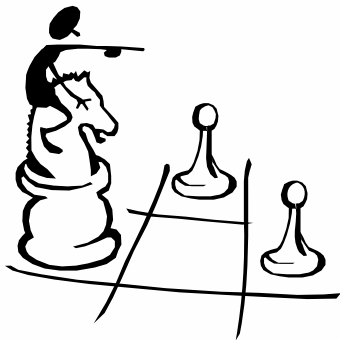


# Identification of competencies



## Traditional model - Occupational analysis

- Analyze activities and requirements of workers and the technical and environmental factors of the occupation
- Identify the tasks involved in the occupation together with the required skills, knowledge, aptitudes and responsibilities



## Functional analysis - deductive strategy

- Establish the main purpose of the productive function or service
- Find out what functions need to be performed
- It does not refer to the system itself but to the relationship between the system and its setting (between results and skills, knowledge and aptitudes)



# Standardisation of competencies



Labour competencies standards (LCS) -  
standardised description of identified competencies

Typically includes

- What an individual should be capable of doing.
- The way in which his/her performance should be judged.
- The conditions under which the individual should demonstrate his competency.
- The types of evidence that are necessary and sufficient to ensure that the performance has been consistent, and based on effective knowledge.
- The ability to obtain quality results with the efficient and safe performance of an activity.
- The ability to solve problems that may appear while exercising the productive function.
- The ability to transfer knowledge, abilities and skills already possessed to other labour contexts



# Traditional presentation of LCS



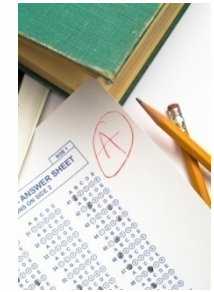
Competence		
Performance criteria (a result and an assessment statement that proves performance)	Evidence required for assessment	
	Evidence of performance	
	Direct performance (situations against which the result is shown)	Product evidence (tangible results)
Fields of application (different circumstances at the work place, materials and organisational environment,...)	Evidence of knowledge and comprehension (specifies the knowledge - principles, theory, methodology, etc.)	
Assessment guide The assessment method and the use of evidence to assess competency		



# Competency based assessment

Collecting evidence to prove that people can perform a particular activity according to specific standards

- based on standards which include criteria for each competence
- assessment is individual (no comparison with the others)
- not subject to the completion of a specified training action
- criteria based on threshold (competent/not competent)
- done in a real working situation, not time limited
- it is a tool for the orientation of subsequent learning

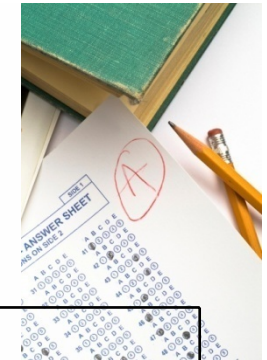


## Traditional assessment

- associated to a course or programme
- parts of the programme are assessed by means of subjects
- parts of the programme are included in final exam
- passing criteria is based on marking scale
- it is done within limited periods of time
- often statistical comparisons are used



# Labour competencies - assessment



Method	Description
Oral questions	Interview, observation at workplace, presentation, debate "what if"
Written questions	Establish evidence of basic knowledge, principles, environmental impact, technical and safety issues, etc
Observation of performance	Find evidence that normally occur as a result of work
Task mocks	Collect evidence about unusual situations
Products	Check the quality of products
Portofolio	Prior performance (authenticiated by acknowledged assessors)



# Labour competencies - certification

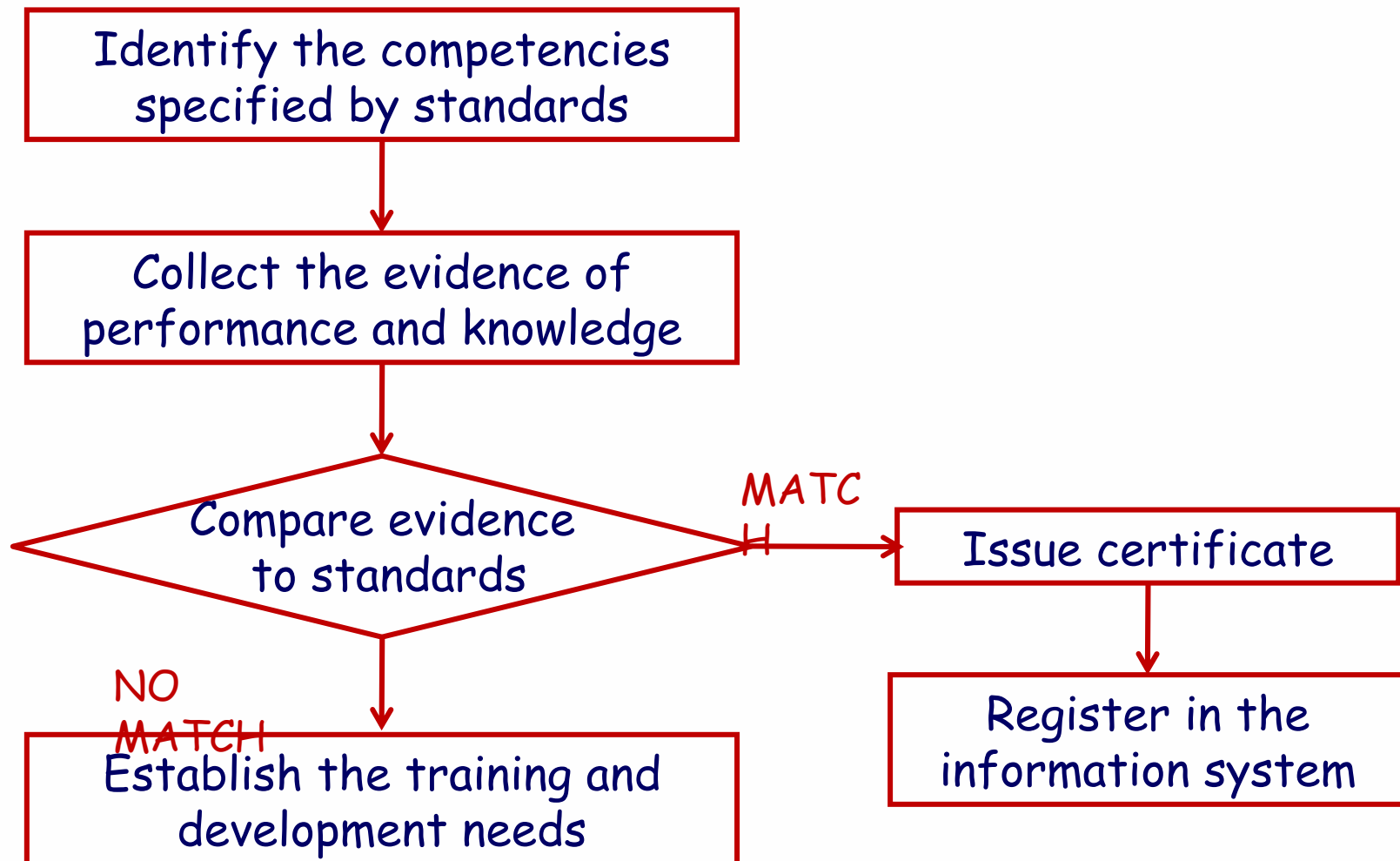


- Certification - process aiming at the formal recognition of occupational qualifications of workers, without taking into account the way in which those qualifications were acquired
- LLL by definition restricts validity of any certificate
- Certification process has to have the following characteristics
  - ✓ It is done within a consistent occupational framework
  - ✓ It requires a framework of legitimacy and appraisal for the certificate
  - ✓ It must be carried out with a simple mechanism (avoid bureaucracy)
  - ✓ It should be legitimate and credible
  - ✓ It should foster transparency
- Who and how competencies are certified (Certification body and standards)
  - ✓ strict separation of the trainer, assessor and certifier, or ...





# Labour competencies - certification process



# Institutional characteristics of certification in Europe

Characteristics	Germany	France	Spain	England
Main	Alternate training company-centre (Companies are in charge of training)	EDU & VT regulated by MoE Recognition of prior learning for adults Several certification programmes in companies	Three subsystems of training: <i>Initial</i> - EDU cycle <i>Occupational</i> - unemployed <i>Continuous</i> - employees	A national framework of levels and areas of competency regulated by National Authority in charge of EDU and labour issues
Regulating body	Federal Institute for VET (BIBB)	Ministry of Education (MoE)	National Qualifications Institute (INCUAL)	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)
Standards	National, established by BIBB	National references, established by MoE	Occupational profiles established and regulated by Royal Decree	Established by Entrepreneurial Chambers
Strengths	Labour practice Companies in charge of training National standards under one authority	Highly reliable regulation because of being public and national. Integrated education and VT	National references focused on different clients. VT integrated to educational system	National comprehensive and integrating framework. Integrated education and VT
Weaknesses	The dual system's efficiency is questioned since it is focused on only one practice	Employers criticise the system due to the low applicability of diplomas because academic knowledge is still more important	More coordination among the initial, continuous and occupational training systems is required	The description of qualifications, though objective, was excessive

CEDEFOP - Certification and legibility of competencies

# Institutional characteristics of certification in Europe

Weaknesses	The dual system's efficiency is questioned since it is focused on only one practice	Employers criticise the system due to the low applicability of diplomas because academic knowledge is still more important	More coordination among the initial, continuous and occupational training systems is required	The description of qualifications, though objective, was excessive
------------	---	--	---	--



# Quality assurance

- Certifying body and the assessment centre have QA systems which provides for *impartial, transparent and objective* results
- The assessment centre have internal verification mechanism - assure that the assessment is carried out according to the established procedures and guidelines , it controls
  - ✓ Assessment practice
  - ✓ Assessment plans
  - ✓ Portfolio of evidence
- A certifying body is in charge of external verification of the assessment centre, its role is to
  - ✓ Produce diagnosis of the assessment centre
  - ✓ Produce and implement an external verification
  - ✓ Produce a report on "non-conformances"



# Customer satisfaction matters even in HE?



- With the economic stranglehold both students happiness on campus and later success in the workplace are increasingly becoming critical to the economic future of HE institution
- Neither students nor professors (at least not publicly) like to refer to students as “customers”, but are applying business management strategies (focusing on the whole student experience, not only on academic aspect)
- The costly and competitive educational environment calls for expanding definition of “customer” beyond on-campus students
- In addition to students and staff, key stakeholders in the academic enterprise are parents, communities and employers



# Business ideas in the "Ivory tower"



- Most (all?) educators like their ivory tower.
- Many would rebel (and are rebelling) at the notion of administration interfering with what goes on in the classroom.
- Some fear that they will be providing personal nurturing and menial job training in lieu of rigorous academics.
- They worry that the very values they hold dear - respect for the theoretical, academic intensity, autonomy - will be undermined.
- Perhaps faculty members also worry about whether they have the know-how to teach what might be demanded of them in a new environment (!)
- Yet, they are forced to employ business strategies into their operational thinking - business stakeholder analysis can certainly help



# Business stakeholders analysis



- Stakeholders are individuals or entities who stand to gain or lose from the success or failure of a system or an organization.
- Stakeholder theory suggests that businesses need to pay attention to stakeholders by focusing on those who affect or are affected by its products or services.
- Stakeholder analysis creates a framework within which businesses identify, evaluate, and then incorporate these interests into their decision-making processes.
- Well-structured consideration of expanded interests leads to better planning, new and creative initiatives and improved resource allocation--all of which promote organizational success and curb failure





# Identifying relevant stakeholders

- Students, faculty, administrators
- Alumni, parents, local community
- Public and private entities that will be employing graduating students
- Ultimate consumer of the employer's product
  - e.g. a medical school would consider the patients in addition to the hospitals

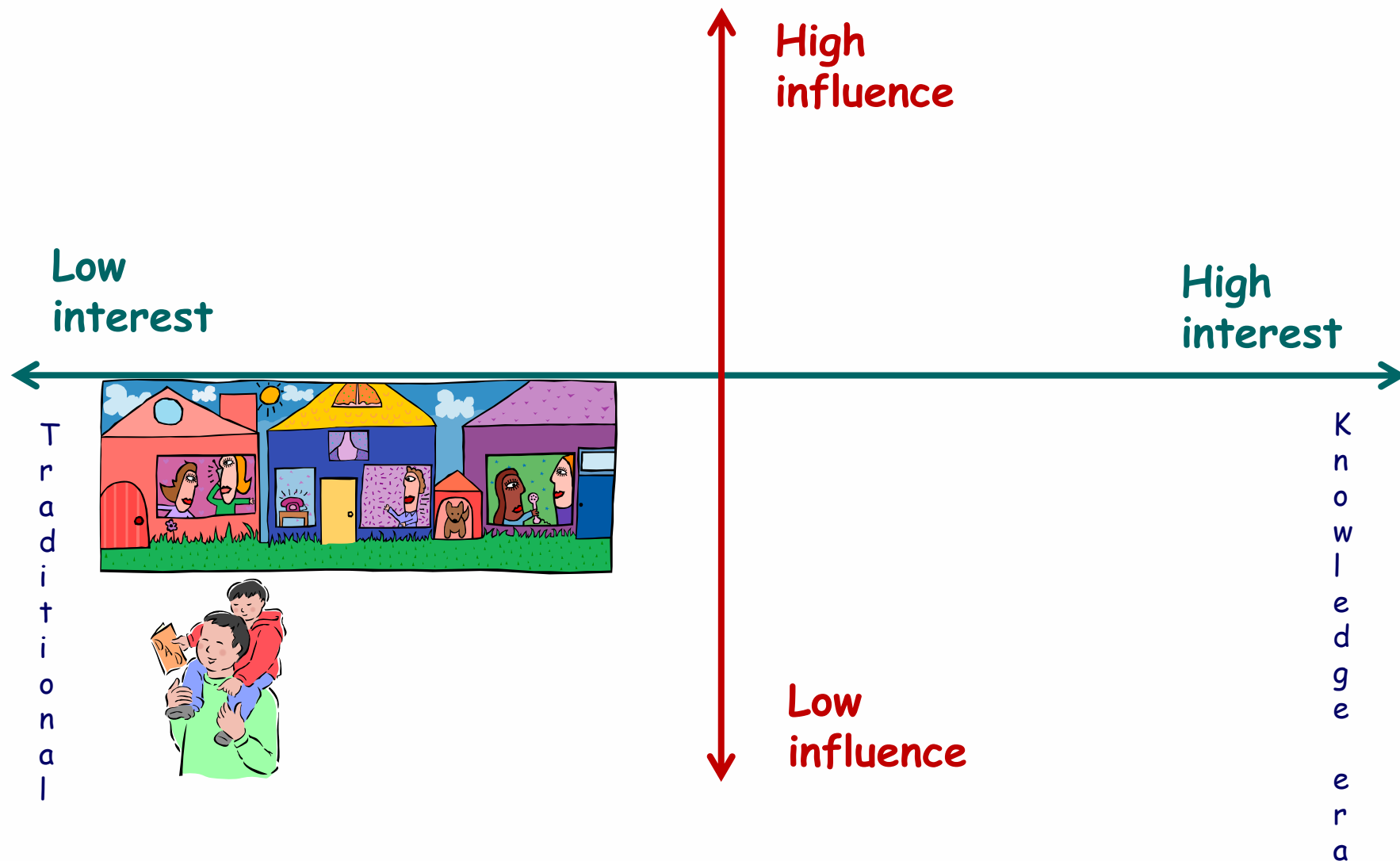


## Prioritizing

- Assessing both relative interest in and influence on (power within) the organization
- From a business perspective those with both the greatest interest and influence are of the highest priority
- Those with the least interest and least influence may be worth cultivating prospectively but need not have a mainstream role in business planning

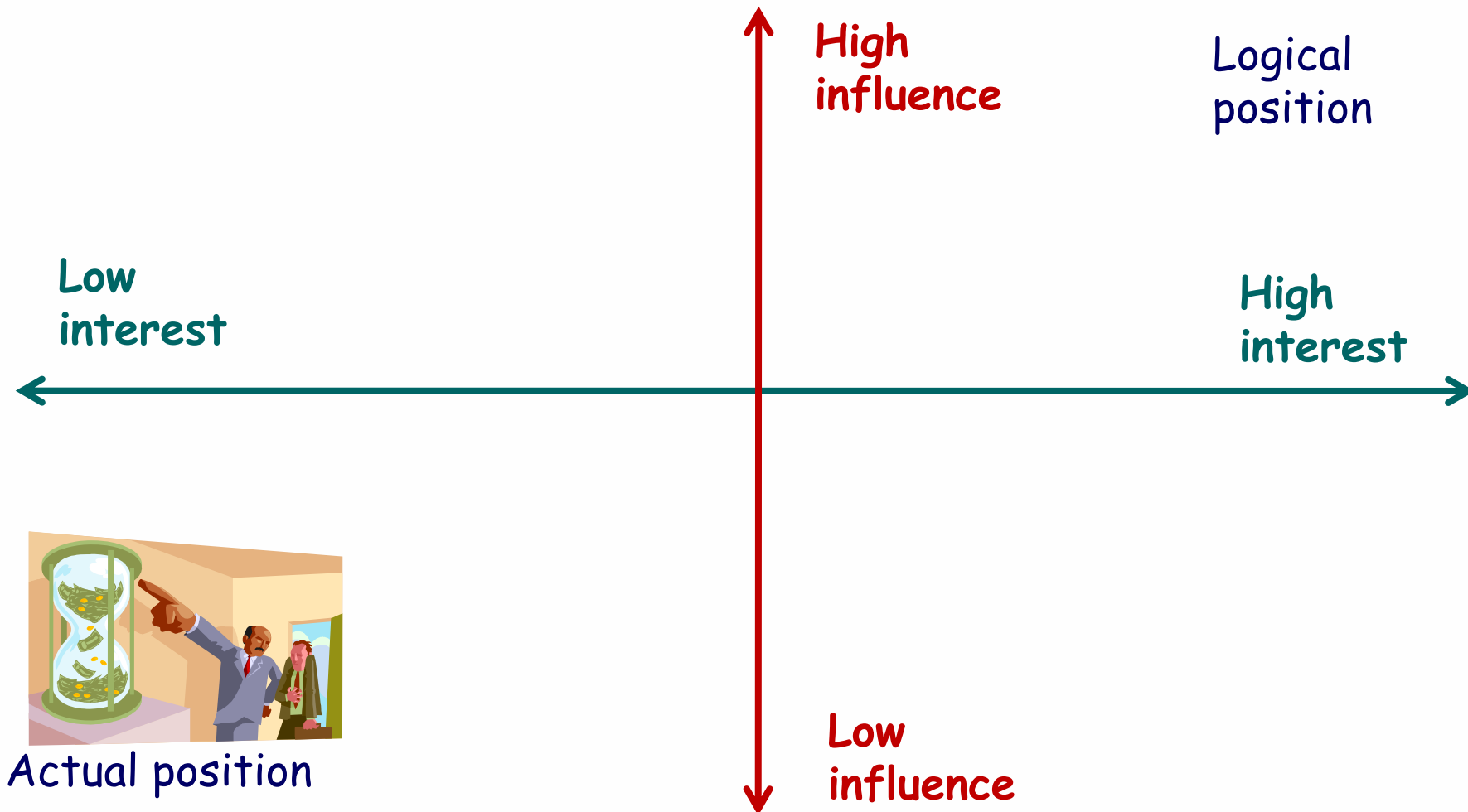


# Interest/influence chart - parents and community



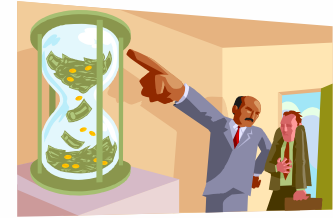
⇒ important to increase communication with both constituencies and to consider ways to involve them more fully within the life of the institution

# Interest/influence chart - employers



If a graduating student is unemployable, or needs extensive training, then the educational institution has failed

# Forcing employers shift



- If educational institutions have a better sense of what employers want in their future employees and businesses have opportunities to share their needs and obtain graduates who are better workers, then both enterprises benefit
- To move employers into the high interest/high influence quadrant, and to fit there comfortably, both groups must change
  - ✓ Educational institutions should start listening to employers, understand what they want and then see how those skills can be integrated into the academic experience without undermining the academic enterprise  
Given the diversity among employers and the wide-ranging jobs into which graduates will be placed, this is no small task
  - ✓ Employers have to believe that they can actually induce the change (instead of turning towards corporate universities)
- It is certainly premature to assume that the skills that employers want are antithetic to a thoughtful educational enterprise





# Promising strategy

- Obviously, not every class can teach every skill that every employer wants. Nor should it.
- However, educational institutions that listen to employers and are willing to think through with them how needed skills can find a home within the academy will have accomplished several critical goals.
  - ✓ They will have created graduates who will be gainfully employed.
  - ✓ They will have created relationships with employers who are willing to employ their students, as well as willing to work with educators to achieve a match between what academia can provide and what the workplace demands.
- Educators should take their cue from business' successes (?)
- It is time to identify, listen to, and involve more stakeholders in the academic enterprise and to do so continually





# Wrapping up



- A number of tasks faces the HE system in Serbia



- The academic community set (comfortably) in its ways is claiming that it cannot move before the state defines main lines of action

- The state is rather busy inventing ad-hoc survival strategies



- Employers are turning into displeased customers



- Students (another group of unsatisfied customers) are starting to look around for different options



- The whole HE education arena starts to look as a complete mess,  
or am I wrong (as usual)?

