

L M D System in Algeria

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The following article refers to the start of the L.M.D. system in Algeria as decided by policymakers in Algeria. A brief summary of the Algerian university 'usual' system will be provided in which programmes and drawbacks as well as the consequences of the latest reform will be given ample explanation. Finally, the aftermath of the LMD system will give readers recently picked news regarding the hurdles encountered by both teachers as well as students inside their specific universities.

Key words: LMD system, high education

1. Overview

When Algeria got its independence in 1962, the Algerian authorities were left with the remainders of an education system which focused not only on European content but was also carried out in a foreign language by foreign teachers. Algerian policy makers planned to modify the educational organization so as to make it more suitable to the requirements of an 'embryonic' nation. The characteristics of their plan were indigenisation, arabization, and a great importance on both scientific and technical studies. They wanted to enhance literacy, make available free education, achieve obligatory primary school enrolment, and get rid of foreign teachers as well as programmes, in addition to changing French with Arabic as having the status of the medium of instruction. Besides they projected to direct students into scientific along with technical fields, denoting the requirements of both Algerian industrial and managerial sectors.

In relation to the higher education system which was initially espoused by the University of Algiers, it laid emphasis on the autonomy of the university faculties not only in the management of administration but also in planning set of courses along with coordinating programmes of study intended for specific degrees. As a result the system gave birth to awkwardness, replica of university

offerings, as well as full deficit of admission by students altering courses. Besides, this system deeply and slowly affected the rate of decline of the established educational system. To make changes to the university system, a number of reforms were planned starting from 1971. Despite that, the universities even now heavily look a lot like the French prototype, and French language keeps on being extensively employed for instructional uses.

Nowadays, higher education in Algeria is available at 60 higher education institutions among which 32 have the status of universities, and the rest is made of 10 university centers, 6 national schools, 6 national institutes, and 4 teacher-training institutes. The total number of students is about 1250 000 students who are supervised by a total number of about 40000 teachers among whom about 25 % are PHD holders.¹

A good number of Algeria's universities are situated in the northern coastal areas and function like umbrellas meant for a big amount of faculties, to a large extent similar to the French university system, which in turn are divided into university departments. Starting from 1990s onwards, the ministry has launched the three-year 'Diplôme d'Etudes Universitaires Appliquées' (DEUA) whose major concern is to focus first and foremost on technological areas as well as a variety of natural science topics and applied psychology, statistics, secretarial, along with library science.

With the advent of the University of Continuing Education era, 'non-baccalauréat' holding students have been given since 1990 the opportunity to further post-secondary education by means of individual access examinations, along with offering direct accesses to owners of the 'baccalauréat.'

2. Programs and Degrees

With regard to the existing system the specific degrees recognized by the Ministry of higher education are chosen in accordance with the field of study. The entire awards are provided by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

At the undergraduate level, courses are obtainable on two similar lines. In relation to the short three-year line, which in most cases does not give access to further studies, graduate students are granted the 'Diplôme d'Etudes Universitaires Appliquées' (DEUA). It is to be remarked that four- to five-year long programs leading to the 'Licence' or 'Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures' (both four years) are widespread. However, The Licence, which is given in the humanities

and social sciences to graduates of universities, is the main degree offered within university departments.

The initial research degree at hand to graduates of major 'Licence' and 'DES long programs' is the two-year 'Diplôme de Magister'. Students undertake basic hands-on experience along with academic courses in addition to courses and non-compulsory courses in their area of specialization. Furthermore, students are required to study a foreign language and conduct original research ending in both the preparation and defense of a thesis.

The most important degree given in Algeria is the 'Doctoral' degree. Holders of the 'Magister' can after three to six years of original research sit for public doctorate (nine years of higher education) viva voice. Nevertheless, a publication of at least one article in a scholarly journal is compulsory so that the defense of a thesis can take place. Post graduates are awarded, a grade of 'honorable' or 'très honorable' on the dissertation decision.

3 "LMD" reforms

The Algerian planning of university degrees, which is established according to the French structure, is at the present time under deep restructuring alongside with the ordinary system. A long-term three-tier system considered to be more worldwide congruent and recognized as the "L.M.D.," has been established since 2003/2004 to launch a degree structure build on the fresh French model of bachelor's, masters and doctoral degrees (*L*icence, *M*aster, *D*octorat). Initiated by executive decree in 2004, the reforms are being undertaken as a pilot project at 18 Algerian universities, which are working in consultation with a great number of European universities. It is within this perspective that both social and economic development built on research and innovation were considered as real providers to prop up knowledge² inside the Algerian society. The innovative degree structure is analogous in organization to the changes being carried out in Europe all through the Bologna Process:³

- *The 'licence', corresponds to three years of study beyond the 'baccalauréat' (Bac+3);*
- *The 'master', corresponds to two years further study beyond the 'licence' (Bac+5);*
- *The 'doctorat', corresponds to three years of research beyond the 'master' (BAC+8).*

Owing to a rapid and major growth a variety of limitations took place in both planning as well as sufficient training so as to suit the

changes of the socio-economic world. For that reason it is hoped that the new system will make program contributions from Algerian universities well-suited with those around the world, thus intensifying the worldwide mobility of Algerian faculty and students. In addition, the changes are meant to develop student flexibility in choosing as well as transferring courses and credits; making the system well-organized in that the student is aware of the time it takes to graduate; expanding constant learning opportunities; as well as increasing institutional independence at the same time as producing learning outcomes more adjusted to the requirements of employment.

The introduction of a unit- along with credit-accumulation scheme has been planned to improve student mobility and restructure classes into modules that consist of main courses restricted to the common field of study; compulsory courses intended for specific areas of interest; in addition to non-compulsory courses beyond the student's field of specialty. Both teaching and evaluation intended for every module are planned frequently throughout semester basis. The latter is built around a specific amount of university credit hours which are transferable as elements of the whole unit of study. In addition, one particular credit is consistent with a student average workload of 20 to 25 hours, adding to one semester of continuous study which corresponds to 30 credit hours. In proportion to the freshly established European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)⁴, credit loads concerning the innovative university organization are like this (See figure below):

- **Licence** (BAC+3 corresponding to BAC+6 semesters) = 180 credits.
- **Master** ('Licence' + 2 years corresponding to 'Licence' + 4 semesters) = 120 credits.
- **Doctorat** (eight years of higher education): awarded after research work lasting at least three years and defense of a thesis.

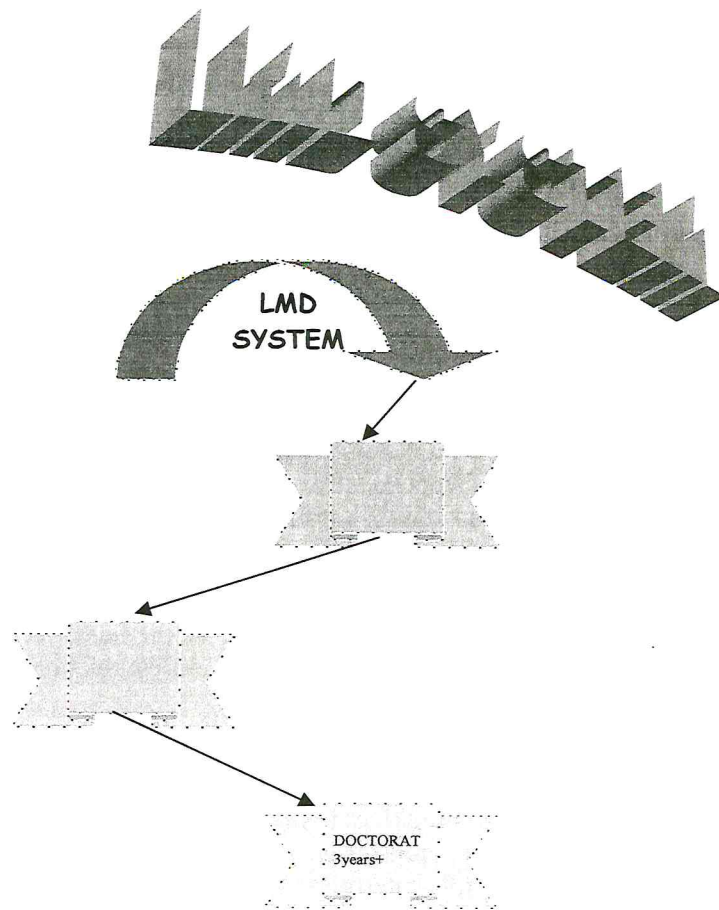


Figure 1: L.M.D. system

The above restructuring must reinforce the main beliefs of the present Algerian university whose most important duties are directly linked with the Algerian university promoters.

4. Aftermath of the LMD reform

Three years after the beginning of the LMD reform some significant constraints are still real. Being seen differently by teachers and students, these impediments concerned both the outside as well as the inside world of the university. Let us mention some:

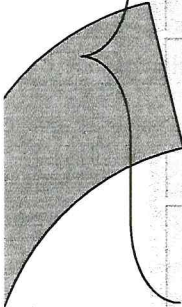
- Intense anxiety⁵ on both the students as well as teachers' sides; a state of affairs that requires prior information before the entrance at the university and during the registration at the university;
- Teachers still cling to the "traditional" system in that they themselves refuse to go along with the change related to the management of a real pedagogic team framework. Being accustomed to work independently, that is teaching "their modules", they prefer to stay behind their ivory castles; they resist change;
- Almost impossible to suggest professional training as stated by the LMD promoters; in other words, both sides; i.e. enterprises and universities need intense and closest relations; as stated by
- The important flux of students enrolled at the university (about 220 000 new baccalaureat holders registered in 2006-2007) hamper teachers' initiatives to make happen actions like tutorial, the student personal evaluation, pedagogic accessories, training inside enterprises.⁶

The above drawbacks incite us not only to explain accurately the objective of this innovative reform, but also to think about adequate training deeply connected to the LMD system and establish abundant set of connections with other economic areas. Last but not least, primary stress should be made on the two remaining levels, i.e. it is important to lay sound basis for both the master and the doctorate because the practice of the first three years in our country has revealed that the LMD system does not work further than the licence degree. The LMD is not the miracle experience if it is rethought about, improved, and adjusted according to both students' ambitions and social and national needs before being accepted. Paramount importance should be given not only to the realm of training but also sharpened up-to-date research. In what follows a summary table will be given to clarify the major differences between the two systems, the classical as well as the LMD system (see figure 2 below):

From the table below, one can affirm that the LMD reform if used effectively can no doubt make a genuine change regarding higher education in Algeria. This has already been the case for a number of foreign countries which have taken the opportunity to launch this reform so that deep transformation of their higher education system can take place, mainly in terms of restructuring duties among a range of actors as well as giving absolute significance to training aims at professional output.

5. Conclusion

In this article I have given a short review of the Algerian university mainstream system with its programmes and drawbacks. Ample description has been provided so that the consequences of the LMD system will be given adequate justifications. It is vital to put down firm foundations in support of post-graduate studies and material aid. The university is the one and only institution from which genuine scientific progress could be assured. In conclusion, policy must not only preserve knowledge from clannish powers but also defend its neutral stance.



CLASSICAL SYSTEM	LMD SYSTEM
Illegible diplomas put into question once outside national borders	Legible diplomas that can be compared to worldwide standards
Immobility of both teachers and students	Mobility of both teachers as well as students inside as well as outside the national country
Almost no link with the market! Students are lost within the difficult world of labour!	Integration of multidisciplinary approaches with regard training in relation to complex jobs
Years of learning experience are put into question when joining other institutions	Years of experience acquired remain the same which reduces percentage of students' failure
Strong dictatorship of knowledge	Dictatorship of knowledge is less important
Compensation is possible between modules	Compensation between modules is not possible
The curriculum is loaded	Based on shorter/tailored and more targetted academic curriculum
Evaluation based on annual system with two or three exams	Semestrial evaluation based on semestrial modular and credits
Attendance is 'optional' because 'teachers' allow students who were absent throughout a couple of months to do exams!!!	Attendance is required

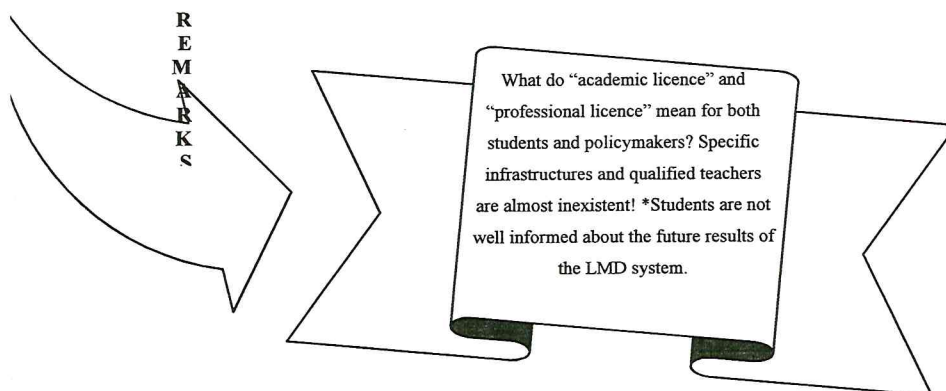


Figure 2: A summary table of the classical and the LMD system.

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July 2005, Algiers Seminar; June 2007, Lubumbashi; July 2007, the Bologna Process. In; *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*.

Djekoun, A.; (2007); In. 'Le système LMD: entre implémentation et projection', *Actes du colloque International*; Alger 30et 31 mai 2007, p. 19. European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits. Refer to WES Grade Conversion Guide at: www.wes.org/gradeconversionguide.

1. Djekoun, A.; (2007); In. 'Le système LMD: entre implémentation et projection', *Actes du colloque International*; Alger 30et 31 mai 2007, p. 19.
 2. Djekoun, A.; In. 'Le système LMD: entre implémentation et projection', *Actes du colloque International*; pp. 18-33.
 3. These changes concern all the countries of the 'global village' and not just the 'developing' countries. It is in that sense that European Union countries have conceived the Bologna Process, the finality of which is the adaptation of HE systems to these new stakes. Inspired from Nordic and Anglo-Saxon models, this 'mega reform', signed by 45 countries, has met great implementation difficulties in countries with different traditions, such as those of southern Europe, Germany – and even more – Central European countries which have experienced difficulties adapting their curricula to the three dimensions of the Process (Licence degree/Master/PhD, mobility, quality assurance).The main issues raised by the Bologna Process: harmonization of the teaching curricula, governance, quality assurance and accreditation/recognition of degrees, interuniversity and intersector mobility (between universities and businesses) and the recurrent question of adapting training to the labour market. (Dakar Seminar, July 2005, Algiers Seminar; June 2007, Lubumbashi; July 2007, the Bologna Process. In; *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*.
 4. The above sub-divisions (or degrees) of Higher education in which years of study are no longer taken into consideration can be attained by acquiring European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits. Refer to WES Grade Conversion Guide at: www.wes.org/gradeconversionguide/.
 5. Scovel, T.; (1978); The Effect of Affect on Foreign Language Learning: A Review of the Anxiety Research; *Language Learning* 28, pp.129-42.
As stated by Scovel (1978), the anxiety concept refers to both facilitating and debilitating anxiety: "facilitating anxiety motivates the learner to "fight" the new learning task; it gears the learner emotionally for approach behaviour. Debilitating anxiety, in contrast, motivates the learner to flee the learning task." p. 139.
- Djekoun, A.; In. 'Le système LMD: entre implémentation et projection', *Actes du colloque International*; p. 29.

