



Measuring, recognising and rewarding teaching quality at University of Helsinki

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UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI



Introduction

- Researcher's expertise on teaching in university context
 - Researcher or teacher? Or both?
 - Scholarship of teaching
- What are the characteristics of scholarship of teaching in practice?
- Why do we need to think about scholarship of teaching? Why is it so important?
- How could scholarship of teaching and learning be supported in the university context?
- Two concrete examples: how do we measure, recognise and reward teaching quality in practice?
- Reflections





To be a researcher or a teacher – or both?

- Those who teach at university are primarily researcher (Elen, Lindblom-Ylänne & Clement 2007), who balance between research, teaching and administrative work
- Traditionally independent and autonomous work
- Researcher's teaching skills are mostly constructed through the research work and practical teaching duties
 - Traditionally, the research merits are emphasised in recruitments – this has changed quite a lot recently
 - It is assumed that pedagogical skills develop simultaneously
 - assumption: "excellent researcher = excellent teacher" (Roche & Marsh 2002)





The dimensions of researcher's expertise – scholarship

- Researcher's expertise and scholarship consists of (Boyer, 1990)
 - scholarship of discovery
 - scholarship of integration
 - scholarship of application
 - **scholarship of teaching**
- cf. Research-based teaching (e.g. Elen et al., 2007; Toom et al., 2010)
 - contents of teaching are based on research
 - teaching methods are based on pedagogical research
 - the approach to teaching is inquiry-oriented and problem-based
 - the curriculum is based on research of the domain and subject as well as pedagogical research





Characteristics of scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL)

Includes various aspects of teaching in relation to student learning (cf. Trigwell et al., 2000; Boyer, 1990; Healey, 2000b)

I. Broad knowledge of teaching

II. Reflection on teaching (cf. Schön, 1995)

III. Conversations of teaching and sharing pedagogical practices

IV. Conceptions of teaching

Scholarly teachers (and communities)

- Know their discipline, its practices and challenges,
- Know the most suitable teaching methods for their own discipline (e.g. Shulman, 1987; Elton, 1992)
- Are committed to continuous professional development (Boyer, 1990; Hutchings, 2000; Atkins, 2001; Gurm, 2009)
- Conduct (domain-specific) pedagogical research (Boyer, 1990)





Scholarship of teaching is realized in the pedagogical conceptions and practices of university teachers

- The conceptions and practices involve various aspects of teaching and instruction, e.g. planning, delivery and assessment of curriculum (Jenkins, 1998), professional development, and collegiality
- The relationships between conceptions and practices are complex
 - The conceptions reflect the practices (Postareff & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2008) and they differ in their quality (Trigwell & Prosser, 1996a; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999)
 - Conceptions and practices might be aligned or unaligned with each other (Prosser et al., 2003; Postareff et al., 2008; Stes & Van Petegem, 2012; Toom et al., 2014)
 - The change of conceptions happens more rapidly (Donche & Van Petegem, 2011)
- Conceptions and practices can develop and change during academic teaching career via pedagogical experiences, pedagogical education, resources for teaching, collegial discussions, participation to pedagogical activities, pedagogical research (Kember & Kwan, 2000; Samuelowicz & Bain, 2001; Stes et al., 2008; Lindblom-Ylänne et al., 2011)





Why is it so important to be interested in scholarship of teaching at university?

- Scholarship of teaching has been defined as a key capability of teachers required in high quality university teaching
- Scholarship of teaching contributes to
 - teachers' increased awareness of the relationship between learning and instruction,
 - development of pedagogical practices in university learning and instruction,
 - student engagement and deep approach to learning (Trigwell et al., 1999; Kreber, 2002; Baeten et al., 2010),
 - students' skills and competences developed while studying at university (Lindblom-Ylänne et al., 2003)
- Teaching matters – all students participate in lectures and seminars





How is it possible to support scholarship of teaching in university context?

Scholarship of teaching is a changing characteristic; it can be influenced and developed

- By organising pedagogical education and support for the development of scholarship of teaching
- By organising informal interdisciplinary contexts to promote pedagogical discussions and sharing of pedagogical practices
- By increasing the emphasis and importance of teaching merits in evaluations and recruitment processes
- By emphasising the status and appreciation of researchers who have teaching merits (with prizes, honours, teachers' academies etc.)





Two concrete examples at University of Helsinki



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Evaluation of teaching merits at UH - Criteria

1. Teaching experience
2. Pedagogical training
3. Ability to produce teaching materials
4. Other teaching merits
5. Demonstration of teaching skills (lesson)
6. Participation in doctoral education

https://www.helsinki.fi/sites/default/files/atoms/files/demonstration_lecture_instruction_and_evaluation_2017.pdf





Teachers' Academy at UH

<https://www.helsinki.fi/en/university/teachers-academy>

- The Teachers' Academy is a network of teachers who have invested their time in the development of teaching, teaching skills and students' learning processes.
- The Teachers' Academy will provide opportunities to earn merit and reward members of the academic community for their teaching qualifications and expertise. Both communities and individuals are encouraged to develop the quality of teaching in a goal-oriented manner.
- The establishment of the Academy is an indication of the value the university community places on the quality of teaching.
- By founding the Teachers' Academy, the University wishes to convey that teaching is a valuable core element of academic work, and that similarly to scholarship in research, teaching can also be learned, developed purposefully and disseminated in a collegial manner.





The Teachers' Academy at UH aims to

- promote the quality of teaching and improve its status in the academic community
- improve the quality of learning and learning results among students
- be an important step in an excellent teacher's career
- improve the status of teaching qualifications and create more comparable documentation
- provide a multidisciplinary community for teachers, that provides collegial support in the development of teaching and learning and promotes good practices at the University





Evaluation criteria

1. Continuous development of expertise of teaching and supervision
2. Teaching and supervision practices that enhance students' learning
3. Expertise in using and developing the teaching materials
4. Participation in collaborative development of teaching

https://www.helsinki.fi/sites/default/files/atoms/files/teachers_academy_criteria_2016.pdf





How does the university benefit from the Academy?

- The potential of high-quality pedagogical expertise to be used for the best of all teachers and students across the faculties – and even beyond
 - Multidisciplinary discussions on the importance of quality teaching at university
 - Explication and exchange of pedagogical practices
 - Innovations, development and research on learning and instruction across the disciplines via the collaboration of the academy members
 - Establishment of reputation of good teaching at the University of Helsinki
- By investing in teachers and pedagogy, the University invests in students and the quality of learning
 - Students are formally engaged in the selection process of the members of the academy
 - Quality learning, excellent experts and researchers on their own areas





Reflections

- How do we identify, measure, reward and support teaching quality on
 - Community level?
 - Programme level?
 - Faculty level?
- What would be the indicators of teaching quality systemically?





THANK YOU!

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