

THE IMPACT OF THE TEACHERS' ACADEMY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT CENTERED TEACHING AND LEARNING CULTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

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ORIENTATION

- Theoretical background of the research project
- Aims and research questions
- Research design
- Tentative results of one part-study
- Conclusions and considerations

INTRODUCTION

- Scholarship of teaching has been defined as a key capability of teachers required in high quality university teaching
- Scholarship of teaching contributes to
 - 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' competences developed while studying (Lindblom-Ylänne et al., 2003)
- Scholarship of teaching changes and can be influenced and developed
- The systematic investigation of scholarship of teaching among the applicants of the teaching academies is rare, and thus, might reveal novel perspectives

UNIVERSITY TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL CONCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES

- 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 (e.g. Postareff & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2008)
 - Quality of conceptions and quality of practices are diverse (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)
 - The change of conceptions happens more rapidly – it is more challenging to change practices (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)

AIMS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

- On project level: to investigate the quality of TA teachers' scholarship of teaching and learning, pedagogical communities of practice, the construction and realisation of student-centered culture of teaching at the HU
- On the level of the part studies:
 - 1) What kind of pedagogical conceptions do the teachers have related to teaching and learning?
 - 2) What kind of pedagogical practices do the teachers report to employ?
 - 3) What kind of significant networks are identified as arenas for the scholarship of teaching?

PARTICIPANTS AND FOCUSES OF STUDY

MICRO LEVEL

Teachers who have applied and have been selected to the TA (qualifications, conceptions of teaching and learning, pedagogical practices), the closet communities of TA teachers (collaboration, pedagogical projects)

EKSO LEVEL

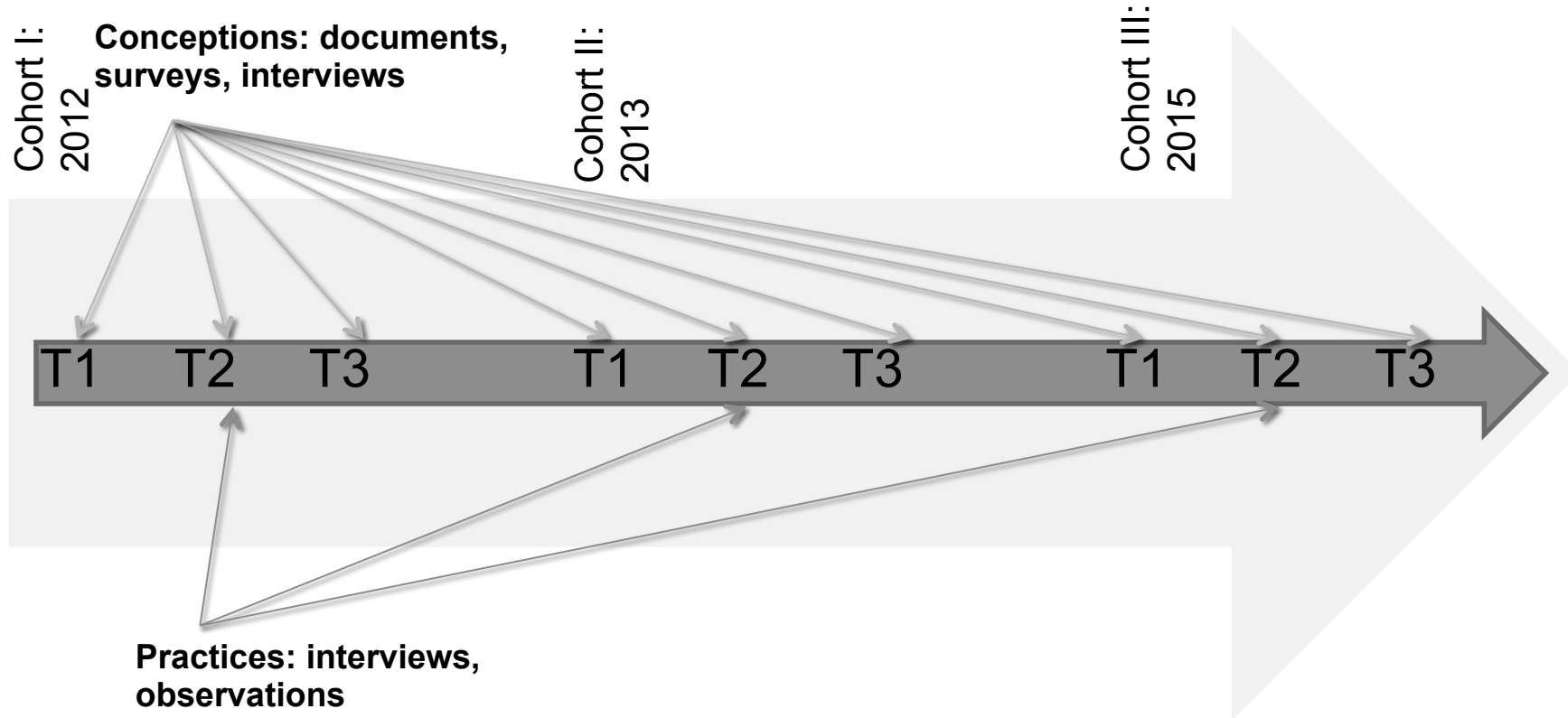
Students: experiences of teaching, study practices, learning (LEARN)

MACRO LEVEL

Research-based development at HU
Appreciation of teaching at HU



LONGITUDINAL MULTIMETHOD STUDY (pilot phase 2012-2015)



AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS IN THIS PART-STUDY

- The aim of this part-study is to gain greater understanding of the conceptions and pedagogical practices of the applicants to the Teachers' Academy. The following research questions are addressed:
 1. What kind of conceptions of teaching and learning do the teachers hold?;
 2. What kind of pedagogical practices do the teachers report to employ?;
 3. What kinds of relations exist between the teachers' conceptions and practices?

PARTICIPANTS

- The survey data were collected from the applicants (n=133) to the Teachers' Academy, University of Helsinki, Finland
 - Altogether 46 applicants (women: 32, 70%; men: 14, 30%; age 39-66 years) completed the survey
 - The response rate was 35%
 - While the response rate remained rather low, the respondents still represented well the faculties and disciplines at the university.
- The majority of participants worked in the teaching position at the University
- The majority of participants had participated in pedagogical education
- Among the respondents, 17 were selected and 29 were not selected to the Academy

DATA

- The data were collected by online survey in 2013.
- The survey consisted of eight open-ended questions and 63 Likert-type (1-5) statements focusing on characteristics of quality instruction; quality learning and supervision; quality university teacher; and 15 background questions
- The items derive from the research on university teaching (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999; Trigwell & Prosser, 2004), scholarship of teaching (Kreber, 2002; Shulman, 1998), pedagogical communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), and students' experiences of university teaching (Parpala & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2012)
- The survey designed for the purposes of this specific study aimed at mapping both the conceptions and practices related to instructional process

STATISTICAL ANALYSES

- Teachers' conceptions were measured with 37 and pedagogical practices with 26 five-point Likert items
 - Due to the low variance, 11 items were discarded from the conception scale and one item from the practices scale.
- The principal axis factoring with a promax (oblique) rotation was done for the conception items and the practices items separately
- Based on the scree plots,
 - four factors were extracted for the teachers' conceptions items that accounted for 52.43% of the total variance,
 - five factors were extracted for the pedagogical practices items that accounted for 64,80% of the total variance.
- The correlations between the factors were calculated
- Due to the deviation of normal distribution for some of the factors, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-test with Bonferroni adjustment was used to test the differences in the factors according to the background variables

RESULTS (I): TEACHERS' CONCEPTIONS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Factor –scale	alpha	M	SD
I) Organised, enjoyable teaching (6 items) e.g. <i>“I plan all my teaching extremely carefully”; “I always enjoy teaching”</i>	0.72	3.91	0.54
II) Pedagogical awareness (5 items) e.g. <i>“I understand thoroughly the impact of various teaching methods on students’ learning outcomes”; “My assessment practices are based on pedagogical research”</i>	0.79	3.95	0.64
III) Learning-focused approach to teaching (8 items) e.g. <i>“My teaching materials promote students’ deep learning”; “I always challenge students to take a critical stance towards contents of teaching”</i>	0.78	4.31	0.48
IV) Collaboration and development of teaching (3 items) <i>“My close community supports collegial development of teaching”; “It is difficult to get teachers involved in developing teaching”</i> (reversed)	0.70	3.38	0.73

RESULTS (II): TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

Factor – Scale	alpha	M	SD
I) Pedagogical development (8 items) e.g. <i>“I participate to pedagogical training to enhance my teaching skills”, “I participate actively to collaborative development of teaching in my discipline”</i>	0.81	3.79	0.80
II) Promoting students' active role in learning (7 items), e.g. <i>“I adjust the learning goals with my students”, “I give students feedback which promotes their learning”</i>	0.79	3.97	0.80
III) Pedagogical research and collegiality (5 items), e.g. <i>“I follow the research on teaching and learning related to my own domain”, “I present my pedagogical practices in pedagogical conferences”</i>	0.83	3.15	1.01
IV) Self-evaluation of teaching and feedback (3 items), e.g. <i>“I evaluate my teaching and supervision practices”, “I use feedback in the development of my teaching”</i>	0.76	4.70	0.53
V) Collegiality and challenges in teaching (3 items), e.g. <i>“I ask my colleagues to give me feedback of my teaching”, “I discuss the challenging questions of teaching with my colleagues”</i>	0.75	3.77	0.82

RESULTS (III): THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CONCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES

Practices Conceptions	Pedagogical development (r)	Promoting students' active role in learning (r)	Pedagogical research and collegiality (r)	Self-evaluation of teaching and feedback (r)	Collegiality and challenges in teaching (r)
Organised enjoyable teaching	.06	.23	.22	.04	-.01
Pedagogical awareness	.41*	.21	.41*	.47**	.36*
Learning- focused approach to teaching	.20	.60**	.32*	.35*	.09
Collaboration and development of teaching	.53**	.04	.14	-.11	.27

(*p < .05; **p < .001)

CONCLUSIONS

- Teachers conceptions and practices concerning teaching, learning and pedagogy were manifold, and they
 - put strong emphasis on student learning
 - reflected the importance of content of learning and teaching
 - reflected teachers' capability and will to invest to quality teaching
 - reflected the qualities of academic teaching and research context
- The learning-focused approach to teaching was a highlighted conception among the teachers
- Teachers emphasized the practices related to self-evaluation and feedback
- The study stresses the importance of pedagogical awareness of teachers: it was related to various kinds of pedagogical practices
- It is necessary to explore the conceptions and practices further and map the emphases and changes on them

THE AIM OF TEACHERS' ACADEMY AT HU

- 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 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

AT THE CORE OF SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING

“The essence in my thoughts related to teaching and supporting learning is that excellence in teaching is comparable to excellence in research. Excellent teaching requires visibility, comparison and collaboration. Excellent teachers attract more excellent people, and pursuing of excellence is highly emphasised. It shows and requires leadership to keep the atmosphere always positive and constructive as well as the ground fertile for the construction of scholarship of teaching.” [TA-teacher, pofo]

THANK YOU!

Teachers' Academy at the University of Helsinki

<http://www.helsinki.fi/opettajienakatemia/eng/index.html>

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