Basics of University Pedagogy learning diary

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1   Becoming a teacher

From the first seminar, I learned about the purpose of this course are 1) providing a guideline to become a better teacher and 2) our University of Oulu expected lecturers to have at least 25 credits on teaching curriculum.

To myself, I want to become a teacher who has the ability to pass the knowledge to students as well as encourage critical thinking among my students. I also want to help students prepare the necessary skills for their working life. I would like to learn how to create an active learning environment, in which students can learn by discovering the knowledge by themselves.

One of the main job for teachers is student assessment. The grading of students should reflect their learning outcome as a way to ensure the actual learning process. However, I surprised that the university refers to the high passing rate, due to the fact that the sooner students get their degree, the better the university gains.

During the class, there is a discussion about certain people with "teacher genes" and that extrovert are better suit to become teachers than introvert. I disagreed with this fixed-mindset argument because I think a good teacher is the one who provides and encourages students to learn [3].

As a first-year doctoral student, in this Spring semester, I had a lecture by myself. The lecture content is good, but I feel extremely nervous, then I end up rushing through the lecture. After that, I think I can do better. Therefore, in this course, I want to learn about the basics pedagogy principles so that I know what I should do and what should I adjust to becoming a competent teacher.

I think that the different perspectives of participants in the class are generally good for the process of learning how to become a better teacher. I can practice the listening and providing constructive feedback which are skills that helpful for a good teacher.

2   Planning teaching with constructive alignment

It is interesting to know that teacher charisma has the most significant effect on younger students. Therefore creating an engagement lecture was not enough. And, it is more important that students are actively learning what they want

because, in the end, students are the center in the teaching and learning process. This again emphasizes the student-center approach [5].

The core idea of designing the teaching plan based on the student-center method is "constructive alignment" which focuses on 1) defining the learning outcomes, 2) creating the learning/teaching activities and 3) determining assessment tasks. First, the defined learning outcomes should be best to cover the important contents of the teaching subject. Then, the learning activities should be the exercises that students could do to practice the "verbs" of the learning outcomes. Finally, the assessment methods must be carefully chosen so that they are aligned with the learning outcomes and activities. Remember that students will find a way to minimize their learning methods to achieve the best possible grading. An example of planning the teaching in the topic of generative adversarial networks (GAN) could be. 1) A learning outcome is describing the essential components of a GAN model. 2) An activity could be the group discussion on how to explain the fundamental element differently and as many as possible. And 3) the assessment will be the presentation of student group discussion.

Some practical pieces of advice include 1) one possible way to choose the teaching content is by answering the question "What contents that the student cannot survive without knowing it after the course?". 2) Standing from the perspective of a beginner to see what are the crucial materials for teaching a subject. 3) Creating pre-exam and/or dedicate lecture to test the student prior knowledge on advanced courses. 4) Beginner teachers should not be afraid, and they should start to shift the focus on the students rather than themselves.

Finally, it is worth to mention about the rich content project provides by UNIPS.fi (University Pedagogical Support) [2]. This website contents a lot of information about university teaching, which could be a valuable source for teachers.

3   (Inter)active learning and teaching methods

The idea behind "constructive alignment" is that the learning activities and assessment methods must be designed to guide students towards the desired learning outcomes. To effectively do this, the teacher should create interesting content and activities so that students voluntarily participate in the lesson. I am interested in some of the interactive techniques [4] such as "pass the chalk" or "one-sentence summary," which I would like to experiment on my teaching subject. Besides, I found the four Rs (Receive, Retrieve, Rate and Reflect) [1] is an amazing routine. Through my learning experience, it is true that the more active I try to recall the information, the easier I can remember it. Moreover, practicing on evaluation the learning information can enhance critical thinking in students because to rate understand, analyze and compare the material.

On the other hand, assessment is a crucial part of the teaching and learning process. Conventionally, students were tested using midterm or final-term written exams in deductive teaching. This method usually counterproductive

because students will gradually develop the "learning-only-for-written-exam" skill. Hence, I think methods like "participants teach", "demonstration event" or "project work" are effective alternatives for evaluating the learning of students.

Interestingly, to sum up, there are several practical advice from experience lectures have been mentioned in this seminar. First, one could try the 20 minutes lecturing rules, because of neuron-science-thingy speaking, the human brain can usually concentrate on about 14-16 minutes. Also, it sounds counter-intuitive but "practicing French vocabulary and English grammar in the same study session is actually helpful" [1].

4   Developing teaching and yourself as a teacher

The last seminar discussed 1) research-based teaching, 2) student feedback, 3) teaching portfolio, 4) teacher self-develop and 5) how do we feel after four pedagogical seminars. These discussions were conducted in a creative manner so-called "learning cafe", which we formed four groups and randomly switched group three times until everyone has a chance to visit all of the topics. This is brilliant because students can actively work with different group and subject.

In general, research-based teaching is a great way to align research and education, universities should focus on research-based oriented. However, in practice, it can bring up the good and bad sides depending on how the courses are organized. For example, a decent lecturer/researcher will always bring up-to-date research into the classroom. This, in turn, keeps the lectures fresh and practical. Moreover, the lecturer has also a lot of research topics, which can be assigned to students in term of advanced practical training. Hence, the research can be pushed further in this way. However, research-based teaching can be easily misleading when students are considered as research subjects.

On the other hand, student feedback was a hot topic, which focuses on how to collect and cope with (positive and negative) feedback. One of the teacher's important task is clarifying what and how will students should give their feedback. Besides, the lesson learned here is we must not take the feedback personally. Always think that what is the feedback about and how does it will help improve the course. Otherwise, it's not a useful one.

Teaching portfolio emphasized personal teaching philosophy and the development as a teacher. This is helpful in long-term to whoever interested in teaching, in general, and being an academic, in particular.

In summary, after this course, I am eager to practice what I have learned to my teaching subject. I think most of my classmates will agree that we have gained much more confidence after participating in these seminars. I assume being a doctoral student at this moment is good for me because I don't have to be in charge of a whole course, so I have time to practice what I have learned from here.

References

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