L01: Biography and Teaching

In this lesson we start with reflecting on your own teaching experience first and to acquire teaching skills at the same time as our scientific skills in order to ensure goal orientation in teaching and thus to foster quality teaching in higher education.

Things we cover in this session

- Reflections on your individual educational biography
- The role and impact of teachers for learning

Things you need for this session

- W01-1 Biography and Teaching

Things to take home from this session

At the end of this session you will have

- examined you own teaching and learning experiences so far
- reflected on your role as a learner and a teacher at the university

Why do we need to think about being / becoming university teachers?

Teacher education for teachers in primary and secondary education usually includes not only content knowledge about their subject matter but also so called pedagogical content knowledge as well as general pedagogical knowledge (cf. Baumert & Kunter, 2013). While the pedagogical content knowledge is rather specific for their subject matter, the general pedagogical knowledge refers to theoretical and practical knowledge about the process of teaching and learning in general. Needless to say, that this knowledge is ideally based on empirical evidence.

For university teachers, on the other hand, there is no mandatory educational curriculum in many countries (including Germany by the way). Thus, most of us decide to pursue a scientific career as a researcher – and teaching is oftentimes just another task in the job description. In the best case scenario, we can afford to co-teach with a colleague in the beginning. Co-teaching can introduce young researchers to this task and they can learn from another, more experienced university teacher. Unfortunately, this experience may be subjective and not necessarily inspired by empirical evidence.

Therefore, we often tend to teach like we were taught. This refers to the content as well as teaching methods both of which need to be tailored flexibly to the students' intended learning outcomes for an individual course. In order to ensure this goal orientation in teaching and thus to foster quality teaching in higher education, we need to reflect on our own teaching experience first and to acquire teaching skills at the same time as our scientific skills. This is especially important as empirical evidence suggests that teaching does not "magically" improve with experience (Marsh, 2007) and that there is no relationship between the quality of teaching and the scientific output of teaching staff

(Hattie & Marsh, 1996).

References

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Hattie, J., & Marsh, H. W. (1996). The Relationship Between Research and Teaching: A Meta-Analysis. Review of Educational Research, 66(4), 507–542.

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