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Mentoring teachers and peer-tutors

FACILITATING LEARNING AS PART OF PEDAGOGICAL STUDIES

Planning (3 ECTS) and implementation of the teaching (8 ECTS) is a key part of pedagogical studies. It belongs to the broader Facilitating Learning study module worth 14 ECTS. At the beginning of the course, the students will learn about the learning environments (1 ECTS) and set their personal goals (1 ECTS). The course ends with the self-assessment (1 ECTS).

Students' who have been teaching for number of years will have different starting points for Facilitating Learning in Practise than those who are just beginning a career in teaching. The key is that in addition to the targets set by the School of Professional Teacher Education students need to set their own personal objectives for Facilitating Learning in their study plans. From the point of view of the educational institution, beginner teacher trainees who are already involved in working life can be seen as an asset providing a fresh take on developing the working life-oriented pedagogy of the educational institution.

LEARNING OUTCOMES SET BY THE SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHER EDUCATION

Facilitating learning is a key competence in teachers' work. Modern ideas about learning and new learning environments have expanded the vision of teaching and the related concept of traditional teaching skills. The central phenomenon of teaching and its facilitation is **learning**. High-quality teaching, learning facilitation and their development are based on a sufficient theoretical knowledge of learning, of the creation of competence and of human beings as learners and builders of their own competence. Facilitating learning always constitutes a practical activity irrespective of whether it takes place in educational institutions, in workplaces or in virtual environments. Knowledge about the underlying principles of learning, and a theoretical understanding of the management of teaching practices, which are based on a recognized understanding of learning, are teachers' key competences.

In addition to knowing about the general principles of learning, a teacher must also understand the **diversity of people as learners**. As students' cultural backgrounds become increasingly diverse, teachers must have the capacity to act in accordance with the capabilities of the learners, respond to the individual learning needs of different learners and an ability to adapt practices in line with economic sustainability provided by the educational environment.

Previously, the key task of a teacher and good professional practice was deemed to be the uncompromising and unquestionable executive of the curriculum. Current curriculum thinking, on the other hand, requires a teacher to have the skills and willingness to continually develop the curriculum in accordance with the requirements of the educational environment in which they practice. Having an interpretative approach to the curriculum is thus part of teachers' competence. When planning teaching episodes along with their objectives and content, designing learning environments, choosing methods to facilitate learning, as well as during interactions teachers need creativity, flexibility and situational sensitivity.

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Based on the preceding paragraph, the intended learning outcomes for **Facilitating Learning** course are:

- *the student knows teachers' different working and learning environments*
- *the student is aware of the phenomena related collaborative learning through interaction*
- *the student knows how to plan, implement and assess meaningful as well as theoretically and ethically sound learning situations and/or modules in different learning environments*
- *the student understands the significance of assessing learning process and learning outcomes*
- *the student knows how to reflect upon their own activities as a facilitator of learning*

STUDY MODES FOR FACILITATING LEARNING

There are various study modes in this module. Students have to:

- independently work on assignments and share the results within their own learning circle and in seminars
- participate in seminars and online working
- familiarize themselves with the literature on teacher identity and agency, teaching, facilitating and assessing learning
- familiarise themselves with the learning environments of the institution, the work of teachers and student groups as well as draft their personal objectives for the course
- act as an asset in the development and implementation of the working life-oriented pedagogy of the educational institution where they conduct their training
- plan, implement and assess a pedagogically grounded learning session
- observe and give feedback on teaching to other teacher trainees 2-4 times

GUIDANCE AND ASSESSMENT OF FACILITATING LEARNING

Facilitating Learning Course is guided and assessed in accordance with the specified learning outcomes and personal study objectives. *A teacher educator from the School of Professional Teacher Education is responsible for the assessment decision.* It will be made according to the assessment criteria on the scale of pass / fail. The assessment decision is based on the student's skills and knowledge demonstrated in various tasks during teaching practice and guidance and assessment discussions with the mentoring teacher, peer-tutor and teacher educator from the School of Professional Teacher Education. These will be assessed in accordance with the skills required to meet the assessment criteria.

Student teachers receive guidance and feedback from their **mentoring teacher** or **colleague**. These mentoring teachers have an important role, particular in the planning, implementation and assessing this assignment. Guidance and feedback is also provided by **peer-tutors** and **teacher educators**. For guidance to be successful, it is essential to have an accepting, safe and supportive atmosphere, to

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support students' self-assessment, as well as giving feedback in appreciation of student's own activity, experiences and self-directedness.

Assessment of teaching practice is open and continuous dialogue between the student, mentoring teacher or colleague, peer-tutor and teacher educator from the School of Professional Teacher Education. The central aim of assessment is to support the student's professional development as a teacher. Sufficient time needs to be reserved for feedback and assessment discussions after each teaching session.

Those involved in the implementation of Facilitating Learning Course:

- Student/learning circle group
- Mentoring teacher = a teacher within the organisation in where teaching practice takes place
- Peer-tutor = another student studying in the teacher education programme
- Teacher educator = own tutor at the School of Professional Teacher Education

Mentoring teacher

The teaching practice of those students who do not currently hold a teaching position is guided by a mentoring teacher from the educational establishment in which the practice is conducted. The mentoring teacher is the closest cooperation partner for students during this period. They will be familiar with the practices of the organisation and the student will benefit from their subject knowledge and pedagogical experience. This guidance relationship is collegial where both participants will learn from each other. Also, students will provide current working life skills for the use of the educational institution. With the help of the mentoring teacher, the student is given the possibility to plan, implement, and assess facilitating learning, while at the same time receiving feedback from an experienced colleague. The mentoring teacher will guide students to conceptualise and structure their actions both before and after teaching sessions. They will encourage students to try and assess the functionality of their teaching activities.

Peer-tutor

The student peer-tutors are students who are studying at the same time in the TEC and work in the same educational establishment, or nearby, or they study in the same group, or in a regional circle. Students support each other's development by observing teaching, planning, and where possible, implementing teaching together, and by participating in feedback discussions. A peer-tutor will observe teaching and give written feedback 2-4 times (look at the teaching practice assessment criteria).

Teacher Educator

The Teacher Educator observes and supports the student's learning process, helps them to deepen their pedagogical thinking and to find new perspectives for facilitating learning. They support both the mentoring teacher and the student during teaching practice. The guidance provided by teachers at the School of Professional Teacher Education can be implemented in many different ways. The instructor conducts guidance and assessment discussions either after monitoring teaching on site at the institution or based on videos made by the student.

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LEARNING ASSIGNMENTS: FACILITATING LEARNING (14 ECTS)

The Facilitating Learning course includes a range of different learning assignments.

1) At the beginning of the course, the students will learn about teachers' different working and learning environments using methods agreed upon with the teachers from the School of Professional Teacher Education. At the same time, students provide current working life skills for the educational institution in a manner agreed with the teacher educator at the School of Professional Teacher Education and the mentoring teacher. Students who are only just becoming teachers or have just started working as teachers will get a preliminary look at the structures of vocational education, the objectives and contents of the operations, and a teacher's tasks. They will also set personal objectives to their own learning process.

2) The second task is the planning, implementing, and evaluating pedagogically grounded teaching sessions. It could be a course or module that includes group teaching, one-on-one guidance, guidance for on-the-job learning or online studies, and so forth. During this time, the student teachers will develop their teaching and facilitating activities based on the feedback received-
Planning includes: Plan for facilitating learning, Plan for teaching sessions and Personal goals.

3) The third task includes feedback discussion with the teacher educator and the summative self-assessment where the students evaluate the process of the course and its results in relation to the goals they defined.

The student should arrange in advance the time and date for the sessions when their teacher educator and peer-tutor are both available to attend to observe and assess their teaching. They should send all of their plans in advance to their peer-tutor, supervising teacher, and their teacher educator.

If and when their teaching sessions are video recorded, they need to arrange with their teacher educator, learning circle and peers times for analysis and assessment. The practicalities of making the video and obtaining the necessary licence are student's responsibility.