

# Professionalisation of teaching staff in higher education

## Network of Quality in Academic Studies Brandenburg in cooperation with the University of Potsdam

Benjamin Klages

### background

- "knowledge society", internationalisation and globalisation of higher education, shaped through the Bologna-Process (Teichler, 2008)
- modification of structures in higher education towards strengthening autonomy, competition and less governmental influence and therefore the demand of a distinct transparency of the performance and the proof of quality
- changing awareness on the topic on qualification and professionalisation of academic (teaching) staff, not only in research, but in close relation to that
- the UNESCO announced "Shift from Teaching to Learning"

At this time, educational academic staff development needs to reformulate itself. Although, counselling and teacher training are still the core issues of these services, but the crucial moment arrogates a realignment of aspects like research and development, too. Furthermore, to grasp the complexity of the matter, a wider and deeper view that integrates the concept of academic development, as related to faculty and organization as well as developing programs, like courses of study or valorization of teaching as for the homo academicus (Bourdieu, 2006).



### higher education network Brandenburg

The Network of Quality in Academic Studies Brandenburg is a regional consolidation of the 9 universities in Brandenburg. It is founded by the ministry of science Brandenburg. The agency is located at the University of Potsdam, as a place to coordinate and organize the entire training program and partly to realize it. Next to this service, a connection to existing and initiated research projects at the University of Potsdam is established.

map of participating universities at the Network of Quality in Higher Education

### -Network of Quality in Academic Studies- -Netzwerk Studienqualität Brandenburg-



The formation and management on the quality of teaching and study is the defined aspiration of this network.

Quality of study is understood as a program that integrates educational development, strategies and characteristics of learning by students and the structures for providing professional teaching (advancement on the culture of teaching and learning) in a comprehensive concept.

### network (ing)

The agency and the coordination site are located at the University of Potsdam. The system of coordinators on every single university (-of applied sciences) function as a cross point, with the objective to...

- form and support the communication between university and agency,
- capture the demand of further training,
- organize and promote the courses on site.

In addition to it, program development and -planning are realized in cooperation between agency and coordinator from each university. Thereby it is tended to index the specify requirement of the participating institutions of higher education at this network.

### programme

The design of the program follows the major premise to be equitable for the target group (e.g. level of academic qualification, discipline), what requires a constant process of development. Accordingly, different didactic formats (e.g. workshops, tutorials, single counselling in the context of auditation) aim for meeting the requirements.



### certificate for academic teaching

For academic teaching staff, that wants to systematically evolve their educational competencies and to extend their teaching image, a specific certificate is founded. The program is based on three steps in a modular and extra occupational way in duration of 2-3 years. Overall it consists of at least 200 work units (wu=45 min.) in the combination of different didactic formats.

### summary

This academic development project focuses on fostering professional competence for academics to fulfill their academic functions in higher education. The pedagogical training focuses on development of a number of specific competencies, which can be used directly in connection to research. This especially refers to planning and teaching in practice. But it also refers to the fact that an increased awareness of learning processes can contribute to an increased understanding of the research process in a constantly and reflexive learning process: as being researcher seeking for new knowledge and equally as being teacher to pass the academic knowledge. It revives the formulated ideal of the unity of research and teaching.

The program structure and at once the aim of the Network of Quality in Academic Studies formulates a useful concept for integrating individual trainings, counseling, the enhancement of study-structures and research about quality plus innovation in professional teaching. Added together, it brings up a complex professionalisation project of development on specialized training programs based on dynamic and valid cognitive process.

**The homo academicus could be characterized by being in a constantly learning process - as being researcher seeking for new knowledge and likewise as being a teacher to pass the given academic knowledge and to learn how to let learn.**

### relevant sources

- Bourdieu, P.: Homo academicus. Frankfurt/M. 2006
- Engeström, Y.: Expansive Learning at Work: toward an activity theoretical reconceptualization. Journal of Education and Work, 2001, 14 (1)
- Holzcamp, K.: Lernen: Subjektwissenschaftliche Grundlegung ("Learning: Subject-Scientific Foundations"). Frankfurt/M. 1993
- Kane, R.G., Sandretto, S. & Heath, C.: An investigation into excellent tertiary teaching: Emphasising reflective practice. Higher Education, 2004, 47 (3), pp. 283-310.
- McAlpine, L. & Weston, C.: Reflection: Issues related to improving professors' teaching and students' learning. Instructional Science, 2000, 28, 363-385.
- Schon, D.S.: The Reflective Practitioner. How Professionals Think in Action. Avebury 1983
- Teichler, U.: 'The Internationalisation of European higher education' debates, policies, trends. Berlin 2008

### research projects by the University of Potsdam

Empirical research that accompany the educational development strategies in combining theory and practice for reflecting and analysing the teachers' world and practice (Schön, 1983)



### participating chairs:

- Adult Education and Learning with Media
- Media and Life Long Learning
- Theorie of Education and Socialisation

### project topics:

- evidence based professionalisation while Internship – concepts of application in academic disciplines (ProPrax)
- didactical concepts for a structured start in academic studies (SEPHA)
- evaluation of the curricular implementation of the architecture of self-learning processes (SLA)

### DiTho – Didactical Theories of Teachers in Higher Education

What are the didactical theories of teachers in higher education?

In which way does these approaches guiding action in learning settings and are they relevant to reflect the educational situation?

What exigencies in learning settings are seen and interpreted as specific learning object for the teacher itself?

### state of the art

Excellence in teaching as constant seeking for further improvement in teaching (Kane et al. 2004: fig. right hand)

Reflection is essential for building knowledge and for the development of being a teacher (McAlpine & Weston, 2000)

Professional practitioner use reflective cycles of deconstruction, reconstruction, trial and re-adjustment on a specific learning object (Engeström, 2001)



### theoretical background

The academic teachers and likewise learners are understood as subjects with own interests and own reasonable reasons as an epistemological frame that is dependent to their individual-biographic and social contexts, in particular the academic identity and the cultural practices within their discipline and the university.

A teacher, as an educational acting person develops its every subjective reasons for being active in the context of situational reflection of educational situations against the background of its own activity repertoire as being a teacher and at the same time as being a learner in a social mediated frame for activity.

Therefore, the process of learning is shortened the acquisition of knowledge. Moreover, the core element could be described as a process in doing analysis, examination and modification of present meanings and interpretations of a given situation and thereby entering a wider field of action options, labeled as expansive learning (Holzkamp, 1993).

### sample

The empirical pilot phase is mainly compiled by (teaching) staff from the University of Potsdam out of the following Faculties: Arts, Philosophy, Human Science, Economic and Social Sciences and also of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. Furthermore, we affiliated teaching staff from the Universities of Applied Sciences Wildau and Eberswalde.

### methods

TRIANGULATION			
data collection		data analysis	
Video-Stimulated-Recall-Interview	Interview on profession orientated biography	Grounded Theory (Symbolic Interactionism)	Documentary Method (Sociology of Knowledge)

### results

First findings indicate: "good teaching is not innate, it can be learned"!

### contact

Benjamin Klages  
University of Potsdam, Germany  
Faculty of Human Science, Institute of Educational Sciences,  
Center for Adult Education and Learning with Media  
email: benjamin.klages@uni-potsdam.de  
phone: 0049-331-977-2397