University teachers' emotions, well-being and pedagogical competence

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Content

- Relations between academic emotions, well-being and pedagogical competence among university teachers

- HowUTeach: Self-assessment tool for higher education teachers

- How to support teachers' well-being in higher education contexts?

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Questions or comments?

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Why is it important to focus on teachers' emotions and well-being?

- Teaching in academic contexts is often considered as an 'emotion-free zone', although teaching is charged with a variety of emotions

- Emotions and well-being influence teachers' cognition and motivation

- Teachers' emotions and well-being are associated with the quality of their teaching and with their willigness to develop their teaching

- Students are influenced by teachers' emotions

(e.g. Sutton & Wheatley 2003; Trigwell, 2012)

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Central concepts 1/3

- **Pedagogical competence**
  - Approaches to teaching: learning-focused and content-focused approach (e.g. Trigwell, Prosser & Taylor, 1994; Postareff & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2008)

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Central concepts 2/3

- **Well-being**
  - Self-efficacy (Skaalvik & Skaalivik, 2010)
  - Work-related stress (Elo et al., 2003)
  - Burnout: (Schaufeli et al., 2012)
    - Exhaustion
    - Inadequacy
    - Cynisism
  - Anxiety (Grossbard et al., 2009)
    - Concentration disruption
    - Worry

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Central concepts 3/3

- **Ademic emotions** – emotions that arise in educational contexts (Pekrun, 1992)
  - Positive - negative
  - Activating - deactivating

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Pair discussion

- Think of a teaching (learning) situation when a positive or negative emotion emerged
- What is that emotion?
- Was it activating or deactivating?
- What triggered that emotion?

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Valence and activation of academic emotions
(Pekrun, 1992)

	Positive	Negative
Activating	joy pride hope enjoyment	anxiety shame anger
Deactivating	relief relaxed	boredom hopelessness

Interview study:
Academic emotions of teachers
(Postareff & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2011)

- 95% of the interviewed teachers (N=97) described emotions related to their teaching, even though none of the questions addressed their emotions

- Positive emotions were described more frequently than negative emotions

- Most frequently mentioned positive emotions:
    - Enjoyment / enthusiasm
    - Empathy, respect for students
    - Satisfaction (teaching is rewarding)

- Most frequently mentioned negative emotions:
    - Reluctance (towards lecturing)
    - Fear, nervousness

The relations between academic emotions and pedagogical competence 1/3
(Postareff & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2011; Postareff & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2015)

- Teachers with a focus on content; no or very little interactivity (content-focused approach)
    - Emotions were seldom described; "emotion-free" teaching descriptions
    - Reluctance towards teaching
    - Often triggered by non-interactive teaching situations

"I am not an enthusiastic teacher. It is something you have to do if you want to hang around at the university".

The relations between academic emotions and pedagogical competence 2/3

(Postareff & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2011; Postareff & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2015)

- Teachers with a focus on the students; high level of interactivity (learning-focused approach)
  - Lots of emotionally charged descriptions
  - Mostly positive emotions such as enjoyment of teaching and enthusiasm
  - Often triggered by interactive situations and use of activating methods

"When I teach I want to be myself and find a real connection with my students. I want to share my enthusiasm with them. Otherwise I cannot really teach".

The relations between academic emotions and pedagogical competence 3/3

(Postareff & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2011; Postareff & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2015)

- Teachers in the middle of a development process
  - More negative emotions than among other teachers
  - Uncertainty, fear, nervousness, low self-efficacy
  - Often triggered by non-interactive teaching and conventional assessment practices

"I principal I know how I could make my teaching more interactive, but I'm afraid of trying new things".

Questionnaire study:
The relations between self-efficacy beliefs, burnout and approaches to teaching
(Yanling, Postareff, Lindblom & Toom, 2018)

- 115 Chinese teacher educators responded to a survey measuring:

  - Self-efficacy beliefs (Trigwell, Ashwin & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2006)

  - Burnout (Socio-contextual Teacher Burnout Inventory STBI; Pietarinen, Pyhältö, Soini & Salmela-Aro, 2013)
    - 1) Exhaustion
    - 2) Inadequacy in teacher-student interaction
  - Approaches to teaching (ATI-R; Trigwell, Prosser & Ginns 2005)
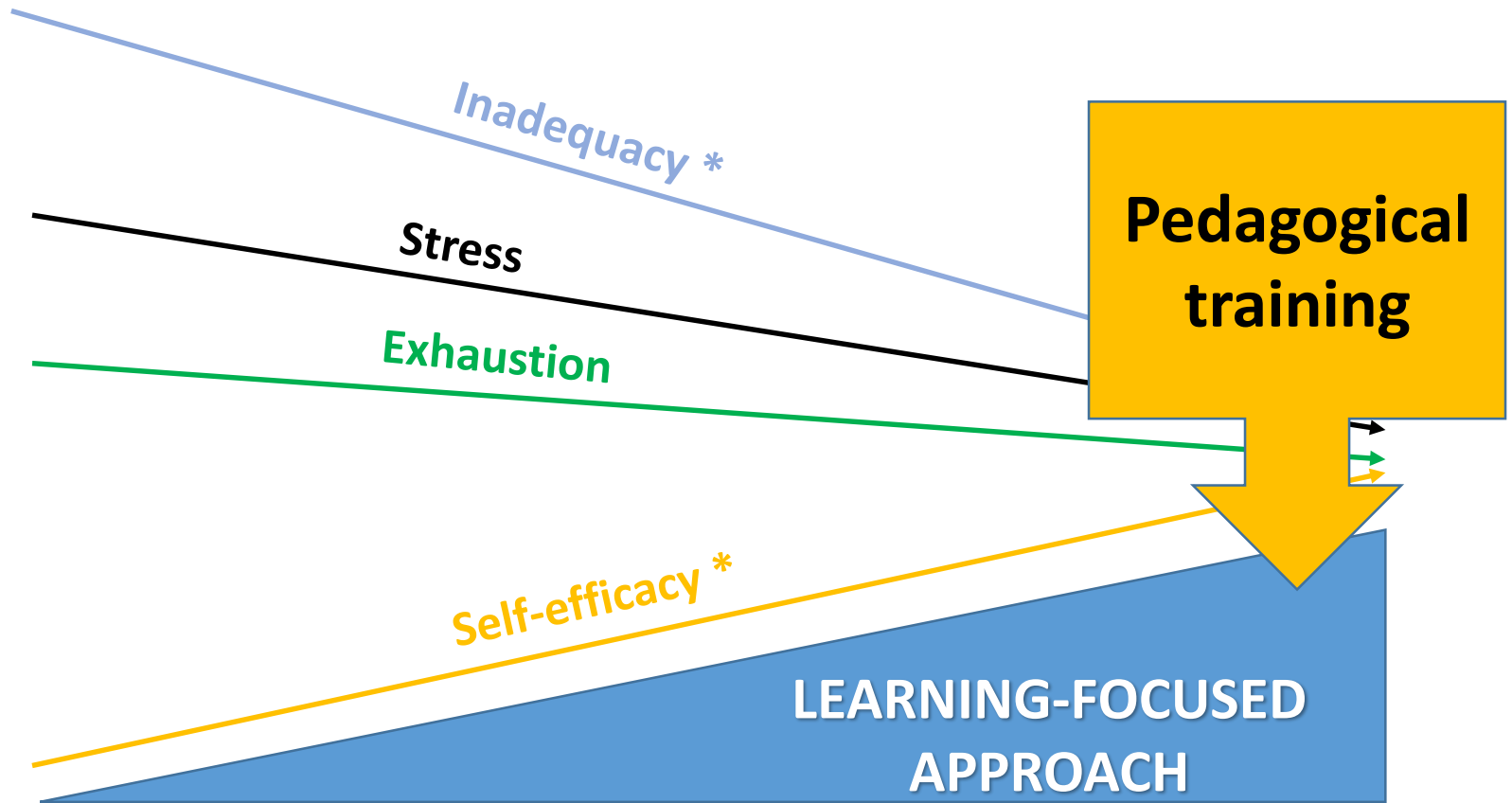
Effects of pedagogical training

"One thing the course had an effect on, is my self-confidence, which was a bit surprising to me. I thought that it would have an effect on my teaching skills and competences, but mostly it made me believe in what I do".
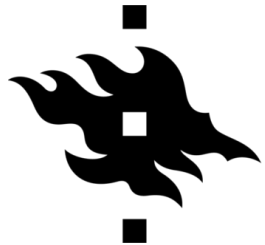
Effects of pedagogical training

"After pedagogical studies my life changed. Nowadays I enjoy teaching because there is more interactivity. Earlier I wasn't able to get a connection with my students. Now, when I teach, there are sparks, and I hope my students can feel it".

HowUTeach –project

HowUTeach – self-assessment instrument for teachers

- The project focuses on teacher educators' pedagogical competence, experiences of their working environment and well-being

- The main goal is to increase teachers' awareness of these elements through developing a self-assessment instrument 'HowUTeach'

- Teachers will receive feedback on the basis of their own responses

- In addition to the survey, we use interviews, a 'learning-tracker' and smart rings to collect data

Scale	Sub-scale
I Approaches to teaching	Supporting students' understanding (α= .89)
	Teacher reflection (α= .78)
	Organised teaching (α= .84)
	Transmission of information (α= .76)
	Devalue of students (α= .79)
II Well-being	Self-efficacy (α= .90)
	Burnout: Exhaustion (α= .81) Cynisism and Inadequacy (α= .80)
	Anxiety: Concentration disruption (α=.91) Worry (α= .89)
	Stress
	Recovery of work-related stress

Scale	Sub-scale
III Experiences of working/teaching environment	Interest and relevance of teaching
	Peer support
	Autonomy
	Utilisation of feedback
IV Regulation of teaching	
V Research-teaching nexus	

Preliminary results of pilot data

	Self-efficacy	Burnout: Exhaustion	Burnout: Cyn&Inad	Anxiety: concentr.	Anxiety: Worry	Level of stress	Negative effect of stress
Supporting under-standing	.50**		-.38**		-.55**		-.39**
Teacher reflection	.28*		-.33*		-.37**		
Organised teaching		.29*		-.30*			
Information trans-mission					.30*		
Devalue of students	-.43**		.44**	.41**	.66**		.43**

HowUTeach Interviews

- Same dimensions as in the questionnaire
- Semi-structured interviews
- Stimulated recall

- Mostly positive emotions
- Moderate levels of stress and anxiety
- Higher levels of uncertainty and inadequacy

When describing early phases of teaching, teachers used expressions such as…

- *"I felt enormously anxious"*

- *"I had lots of negative emotions"*

- *"teaching was not pleasant"*

- *"teaching was painful"*

- *"I felt very insecure"*

- *"I feel very nervous. It has always been like that. Gradually I have become more confident, but everytime the lecture is over I feel relieved. It's quite a survival every time. Maybe it's because I cannot get a contact with my students. I hope it gets better now because I have new tools for teaching. On the other hand, I feel enhtusiastic because my teaching situations are not anymore only about talking in front of the audience. Somehow it feels empowering."*

Conclusions

Teachers' pedagogical competence is strongly related with their well-being

- Enhancement of teachers' pedagogical skills is a sustainable investment

Interactive teaching and 'feeling the connection' with the students seem to be of specific importance for teachers' well-being

- If the teacher feels incapable of using activating methods and interacting with the students, not only students' learning suffer, but also the teacher suffers

Development of teaching is emotionally demanding

- Attempts to interact with students and activate them is often associated with nervousness and fear

How to support teachers' well-being?

TEACHER:

- Increasing teacher's own awareness through self-reflection
- Teacher's own willigness to develop teaching

ACADEMIC COMMUNITY:

- Positive atmosphere and attitudes towards teaching development in the academic community
- Rewarding scholarship of teaching (e.g. recruitment processes, teaching awards)
- Pedagogical training – easy access, flexible arrangements
- Support in different phases of teaching career
- Peer support

To think about…

- Discuss with your colleagues about how you can influence each others' well-being
  - What can you do to positively influence your colleagues' well-being?
  - What can they do to positively influence your well-being?

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