

# Learning and teaching in higher education –course, spring 2017

## Instructions for essay: My approach to teaching and learning

In this essay you will reflect your approach to teaching and learning. When you combine theoretical knowledge with your prior experiences, values and thinking about teaching and learning, you begin to develop your own teaching philosophy or personal practical theory of learning.

The aim of this essay is to begin to formulate your own approach to teaching and learning. Reflect and write your thoughts concerning teaching and learning and how this affects your teaching practices. Your approach to teaching and learning describes your pedagogical thinking, more precisely your views and beliefs based on which you teach and where you base your pedagogical decisions. You can describe and reflect your experiences, conceptions, beliefs, values and knowledge about learning, teaching and studying. With your view you also describe your interpretation of good quality teaching.

The new knowledge may support your pedagogical thinking or challenge you to develop it further. The writing of this essay helps you to analyse and structure your pedagogical thinking and to develop yourself as a teacher. Bring out your own views of teaching and learning and how these can be seen in your own practices. You may use the pre-assignment 1 as a starting point for your essay. The questions below may also help you to start the writing.

- What is your understanding about good learning, teaching, studying and educational development?
- On which experience or knowledge you base your view on?
- What do you consider as being important in learning and teaching?
- Which values and principles guide your teaching?
- How is your thinking about teaching and learning seen in your teaching practices?
- How is your thinking about teaching and learning present in your pedagogical decisions in the class?
- What do you expect from your colleagues and students?
- What are your strengths as a teacher?
- Where do you want to develop yourself as a teacher?
- What do you expect to be the outcomes of your teaching?
- What kind of values, principals and attitudes guides your teaching?
- What kind of interaction you strive to achieve in the class?
- How do you plan to develop in the future?
- Try to crystallize your teaching philosophy (one or two paragraphs).

### About essay

This assignment is written in a form of an essay in which you combine educational literature with your own reflection. So the essay must include literature references.

Essay is personal and reflective writing on certain topic. Author is acquainted with the subject and references. He/she is also able to add his/her own perspective and discuss with different points of views. Essay is not a

summary of references, in essay author gives own arguments. For further reading, Harvard College writing center: <http://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/essay-structure>

The workload of the essay is 40 hours and the length of essay is around 4-6 pages, line spacing 1.5, font size 12.

Deadlines for the versions are:

- First version (version 1.0) DL 24.2.2017 (you will have peer feedback on this version)
- Second version (version 2.0) DL 13.3.2017 (you will have feedback from the teachers)
- Third and final version 21.4.2017

If you have any questions please contact: Maire ([maire.syrjakari@aalto.fi](mailto:maire.syrjakari@aalto.fi)) and Päivi ([paivi.kinnunen@aalto.fi](mailto:paivi.kinnunen@aalto.fi))